Isaac & Rachel Wilson

Quakers, of Kendal, 1714–85

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ISAAC AND RACHEL WILSON

ISAAC AND RACHEL WILSON, QUAKERS, *of* KENDAL, 1714–1785

her great great great grandfather
" " " " " mother.

BY

JOHN SOMERVELL

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To

THREE LATER RACHELS

MY MOTHER, SISTER AND DAUGHTER

PREFACE

This book was written primarily for a far-flung family, as a record of an honoured ancestry, but there may be others to whom either the antiquarian interest, or the account of quiet Quaker life in the eighteenth century, in a North Country town, may appeal.

The existence of Rachel Wilson's Journal of her American Journey was well known, but the remaining records are mostly the outcome of search through bundles of old papers, handed down in the family for generations, the contents of which were entirely unknown, till examined recently.

It always seems to me that two of the most useful equipments for a rising generation are a sense of duty and a sense of humour. In examining these old Quaker records one finds the sense of duty seems to have been overwhelming, in many cases apparently leaving little room for humour.

Dr. Hodgkin points out in his *Life of George Fox* the great difficulty in tracing the history of Quaker families before the seventeenth century, owing to the complete break with the old life by the early Quakers. The labours of anyone trying to extend

a Wilson genealogy are rendered specially difficult by the frequency with which the name occurs in Westmorland. The Kendal Parish Registers are published for forty years in the sixteenth century, and these contain about seven hundred entries of Wilsons !

I am indebted to the Rev. John Jowitt Wilson for much information, and for many good family stories ; to Mr. Theodore Wilson and Mr. H. Arnold Wilson for the loan of many valuable papers ; to Mr. Joseph Bevan Braithwaite for the loan of Rachel Wilson's American Journal ; to the Librarians of Devonshire House Meeting and Kendal Friends Meeting, and to many others.

JOHN SOMERVELL.

BROOM CLOSE, KENDAL,
September, 1924.

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ISAAC AND RACHEL WILSON

CHAPTER I

ISAAC WILSON'S PARENTAGE

Anthony Wilson of High Wray (son of John & Elizabeth Wilson of Little Langdale) was baptized at Grasmere, 18. 3. 1672. He married (8. 5. 1702) Dorothy, daughter of George and Margaret Benson, who was born at Stang End,[1] Little Langdale, 17. 2. 1678, and had a family of six. Anthony, having become acquainted with Dorothy Benson, called on her father one day to obtain his consent to their marriage, and on being asked what means he had of supporting her, replied, "My own hands and the blessing of God," which so pleased old George Benson* that he consented to their union.

Anthony and Dorothy.

Anthony and Dorothy probably settled, after their marriage, at Outgate, a hamlet two miles

[1] Stang End is delightfully situated in the lower part of Little Langdale Valley, about a mile above Colwith Force, raised well up above the south bank of the river, in a lovely broken piece of country below Wetherlam, with fine view of Bow Fell to the west. The house contains an old court cupboard, built into the wall and dated 1691. On the other side of the valley, just opposite, is a house known as "Wilson's Place," which, it seems probable, was the home of John and Elizabeth Wilson.

* Wherever this appears after a name it is a notification that a short biographical notice appears in *Piety Promoted*, which contains such notices of many early Friends.

north of Hawkshead, and here their first child, Elizabeth,* was born, 6. 4. 1703. She married in 1742, Reginald Holme, of Newcastle (son of Jacob Holme, of Langdale), and died at Newcastle in 1781.

Their son John was born 18. 11. 1704, and in 1729 married Anne Cartmel of Preston Patrick, where he settled. John and Anne's eldest daughter, Susannah, married Nathan Gough of Kendal, and became the mother (1757) of John Gough, "the Blind Philosopher," said to have been one of the most remarkable men in the North of England. John Wilson is described in an old pedigree as "of Cowgarth Hall." Before 1706 Anthony and Dorothy seem to have removed to Tockholes, near Wray, and there their son George was born (6. 8. 1706), marrying in 1747, Hannah Blamire* of Grayrigg, and settling at High Wray, which has been associated with his family for nearly two centuries. George died in 1777 and was buried at Colthouse. On 20. 2. 1709 the third son, Anthony, was born. He emigrated to America and married there, returning late in life with some of his family to Hawkshead Hill, where he died in 1776, and was buried at Colthouse.

Dorothy, the second daughter of Anthony and Dorothy, married William Waithman of Lindeth (Silverdale) in 1739, and died in 1772.

Before 1714 Anthony and Dorothy appear to

have removed to the hamlet of High Wray and there, on 16. 1. 1714/15, their youngest son, Isaac,[1] was born, the parents probably remaining there till 1728, when they built the charming High Wray House, still in excellent preservation, nicely sheltered, amid huge rocks, from the fierce winds blowing up Windermere, but with wonderful views, from its lovely garden, of the lake and mountains. Over the front door is a blue stone : "Anthony Wilson and Dorothy his Wife, Built 1728."

The old pedigree referred to above, mentions that Anthony Wilson purchased several estates in the Parish of Hawkshead, so that his confidence when proposing for Dorothy seems to have been justified.

The Bensons were Friends at a very early date, as is proved from the Records at Rydal Hall, published in the Records of the Cumberland and Westmorland Archæological Society, as under "Meetings in Furness 1663. A note in Sir Daniel Fleming's handwriting, among the Rydal Hall Papers, shows that the proceedings of the Friends were soon watched and reported :

Nov. 1, 63. there then mett at ye house of John Benson at Stangend in Lancashire ; these Quakers fol-

[1] Until January 1, 1752, the year began on March 25th, but as March was called "1st month" by Friends, although the first twenty-four days were part of the old year, such a date as that of Isaac's birth, March 16, 1714, was, by Friends, described as 16. 1. 1714/15.

lowing—Westmorland people, Francis Benson, Bernard his son, Regnhold Holme, Michael Wilson, Barbara Benson; Lancashire people, Gyles Walker, Wright, near Hauxside, William Wilson ye speaker and his wife.

These James Russell gave me in ye names of Nov. 5, 63.

Further records show that in 1665 George Benson and four others were taken from a Meeting at Hawkshead by the Justices and sent to prison for refusing the oaths. Again in 1666 George Benson and others committed to prison for refusing to pay tithes, and also for taking part in meeting in the house of Gilkes Walker of Walker Ground.

Piety Promoted describes George Benson as "a faithful Minister in public testimony in neighbouring counties."

From *The Records of Colthouse Burial Ground (near Hawkshead) from* 1658, by Elizabeth J. Satterthwaite, we learn that George Braithwaite sold a small piece of his paddock for use as a Friends' Burial Ground in 1658, and that the Meeting House was built at a much later date. In the list of burials there the names occur of many Braithwaites, Bensons, and Wilsons.

In 1702 more ground had to be added, and many meetings were held on the subject and minutes passed urging the importance of Friends carting stones for the extension walls.

The work was not completed till 1704. Among those engaged in it the name of Anthony Wilson

frequently occurs, showing that he had joined Friends before that time, possibly through association with the Bensons or other neighbours in Little Langdale.

It is not known where the children were at school, but it does not seem improbable that the boys attended Hawkshead Grammar School, afterwards famous as the school where William Wordsworth was educated. The school has been closed for some years and no Registers are in existence.

The family attended the Meeting House at Colthouse, Hawkshead, with their parents.

CHAPTER II

ISAAC WILSON

It would be interesting to know what induced his parents to send their youngest boy, Isaac, to Kendal to be trained in business there, but doubtless there was very close touch between the Quaker family at High Wray and, what was then the important little town, the commercial capital of the district, and a Quaker stronghold which, presumably, the parents visited frequently for Quarterly Meeting, and where doubtless they had many friends who would take a kind oversight over their youngest boy.

Probably Isaac came to Kendal in 1728 to be apprenticed to some Quaker firm of Shearman Dyers, possibly the Braithwaites, to whom his mother was related, or Roger Wakefield. Referring to this trade, the *Boke of Recorde of the Burgh of Kirkby Kendal* gives the following order :

13*th July*, 1587. Item it is ordained and constituted by the Alderman and Burgesses now being That no freeman or other person occupying Shearmancraft within this borough from henceforth shall take no apprentice to be free at the same occupation for any less or shorter time than seven years at least under pain or of as much as 40/-.

5th May, 1641. Item it is ordained by the Court at a Court Leet on the day and year above said That after this no children shall be admitted to be bound apprentice unless the same apprentice so to be bound can write or read.

This order seems strange in view of the general lack of education in these early times.

From the remoteness of High Wray, one can imagine that Kendal must have seemed to the boy a veritable metropolis, with its beautiful old church, and, *more important* to the boy, large Friends' Meeting House ; its ramification of Trade Guilds, with their way of sweeping the industry of Westmorland into the mills and warehouses of Kendal, wool previously carded, spun, and woven in the cottages, knitting, tanning, etc. ; its large markets and fairs, and its host of pack-horses, traversing the narrow streets, carrying the merchandise to distant towns and ports. These were probably the points which struck the boy, rather than its quaint queerness and picturesqueness described below :

EXTRACT FROM "THE ANNALS OF KENDAL" PUBLISHED 1861.

We find also, that, in the beginning of the last (18th) century, the town was very ill paved. The author of *A Fortnight's Ramble to the Lakes*, describing Kendal about the time alluded to, says :

"The tenter-grounds on the sides of the little hills resemble the growth of the vine orchards in Spain ; and from having much and many coloured cloths upon them,

I should hope that trade flourishes. I would wish to say something in praise of the town, but *it is too ill-paved to mind anything but your feet !* "

Mr. Gray, in 1769, complains of the irregularity of the houses. In his journal, addressed to Dr. Wharton, he says, " Excepting these (the lines of the two principal streets), all the houses seem as if they had been dancing *a country dance*, and *were out* ; there they stand, back to back, corner to corner, some up hill, some down, without intent or meaning."

The poor boy's hours of work probably began at 5 or 5.30, and ended at 9, so that he had not much time for self-improvement, recreation, or mischief ; but he doubtless enjoyed the quiet home life of some Quaker households, after meeting on " first day," and so plodded on, looking forward to the time when, in 1735, he would be a Freeman of his trade, and eventually, possibly in business on his own account. Probably, occasionally he walked out to Preston Patrick to see his brother John, or for his short week-ends in summer returned to his parents' home at High Wray.

Among the families of Friends who were kind to the boy was no doubt that of John Wilson, tanner, in Highgate, who had married Deborah Wilson, daughter of Thomas Wilson, a tanner of Stramongate in 1715, They had a family of girls about his own age. The eldest sister, Mary, was married to Roger Wakefield in 1737, but the sweet second girl, Rachel, five years Isaac's junior, doubtless

early attracted him, and he married her on 18. 12. 1740.

The information given in the *Pedigree of Wilson of High Wray and Kendal* by S. B. Foster of the parentage of John Wilson is very meagre.

John Wilson (whose father was killed by a fall from Giggleswick Scar; his mother's name was Baines, she was from near Sedbergh).

The writer believes, from research in the Friends' Records at Kendal, that the statement with regard to the death of John's father is incorrect, but may not be so, as he was a fairly young man when he made his will. On 20. 9. 1688 Thomas Wilson, tanner and farmer, of Highgate, Kendal (not to be confused with Deborah's father T. W., tanner, of *Stramongate*), married at Brigflatts, Sedbergh, Mary Baynes; he was son of John Wilson of Firbank [1] (who afterwards lived with him in Highgate, and survived him), and she was daughter of William and Sarah Baynes, of Stangerthwaite, Killington.

Thomas Wilson's will is dated "29. 2. (April) 1700"; from this it appears that John, Rachel's father, was his only child. The supervisors of his will were his brother-in-law James Baines* of Stangerthwaite, Brian Lancaster, tanner, of Kendal, and James Fell of The Hagg, Hutton. The will was proved 7. 10. 1700.

[1] It seems probable that John Wilson was born about 1630, as from the references to him in his son's will (1700) he appears to have been an old man then.

The writer has always had a special fondness for the wild and beautiful country round Sedbergh, so is interested in this family connection with the district.

Thomas Wilson doubtless grew up on his father's farm at Firbank, and no doubt often heard from him the account of the memorable Meeting on Firbank Fell in "The Wonderful Fortnight" of 1652, where George Fox spoke to about a thousand people for three hours, most likely John Wilson—as a young man—being one of the hearers.

In coming over to Firbank from Kendal, where he had settled, for the week-ends, Thomas doubtless attended Brigflatts Meeting, and among the large Colony of the Baynes (or Baines) family, of Stangerthwaite, was attracted by Mary and married her in 1688.

The family of Baynes of Stangerthwaite seems to have been a large one, the ramifications of which it is impossible to follow, but some of them were Friends from early days, it may be as a result of George Fox's preaching, and suffered persecution and imprisonment.

Thomas Wilson and Mary Baynes were married in the year when the accession of William and Mary brought a brightening on the horizon, to be followed by a greater measure of religious toleration for the Quakers, but doubtless their only son, John, as a boy, often heard stories from his father and mother of the persecutions to which their parents and

families had been subjected. As the outcome of such stories it does not seem unnatural to find in the Kendal Friends' Records a large manuscript book,[1] the title-page of which reads :

In this Booke is Recorded the Suffrings of Fr^{ds}. wth in. Kendall Quar. Meetings w^{ch} at p'sent is kept p me.

JOHN WILSON

Kend^{ll}. ye 28th 1st mo. 1716

This was the parentage on her father's side from which Rachel Wilson sprang.

A faded paper (for which the writer is indebted to Mr. R. Seymour Benson), written in a neat hand, contains the record of the marriage of Rachel Wilson's parents, as under, with its interesting variation from the declaration used in later Friends' weddings :

John and Deborah Wilson were married at Kendal 1715, when John Wilson in a solemn manner taking the

[1] This "Book of Sufferings" contains many interesting items. In 1663 and 1664, the Mayor of Kendal had the goods seized of every householder in Kendal called a Quaker for non-attendance at Church, non-payment of rate for repairs of the Church and attendance at Meetings. Their goods were sold at the Cold Stone in the Market Place.

In 1665 John Beck, on the first day of his Mayoralty, haled twenty Quakers before him for attending a Meeting, which was found to have been held eighteen months previously !

The names of many Wilsons, Baines's, Bensons, Braithwaites, Wakefields, Mosers, Crewdsons, Crosfields, etc., occur in this book.

The book contains three entries in 1684 of the goods, wool, pewter, brass, and other household items having been distrained for fines against Dorothy Wilson, "Widow," for being present at a Meeting in Langdale, and similar offences. If, as seems probable, this Dorothy was the widow of Henry Wilson—grandfather of A. W., of High Wray—this appears to be the earliest trace of that family having joined Friends.

said Deborah Wilson by the hand did openly declare as followeth :

" I desire this assembly to be witnesses to the solemn covenant we are about to enter into. In fear before the Almighty do I John Wilson take thee my most esteemed friend Deborah Wilson to be my married wife, promising through divine assistance to be unto thee a loving and faithful husband until it may please the Lord by death to separate us."

And then and there the said Deborah Wilson having the said John Wilson by the hand did in like manner declare as follows :

" In reverence before the Almighty do I Deborah Wilson take thee my most esteemed friend John Wilson to be my married husband, promising through divine assistance to be unto thee a loving and obedient wife till death."[1]

It would be interesting to know whether all early certificates contained the promise of obedience.

To return to Isaac Wilson.

Before his marriage, presumably, Isaac had begun business on his own account, in the buildings between Stramongate and New Road, so long associated with the Wilson name. The trade of a shear-

[1] The certificate of the marriage of John and Deborah Wilson is still preserved, dated " this Seventeenth day of November (*sic*) in the year according to the account used in Great Brittain One Thousand Seaven Hundred & fifeteen."

The witnesses signing number forty-two, and beside fifteen Wilsons, include the following : Joseph, William, John and Rachel Baynes, John, Bryan, Jr., and Lydia Lancaster, Israel Newby, John and Margaret Crewdson, Elizabeth Chippindell, Elizabeth Pixley, Barbery and Walter Simondson, Eleanor, Thomas, and James Blaykling, Dorothy Rawlinson, Sibil Ellwood, Jr., Mary Woss (?), Dan'l. Stevenson, George Braithwt., Thomas Jackson, John Warrinor, John Jopson, Hannah Kilner, Margaret Story.

man dyer was of great importance in those days. Transport was very difficult, the Westmorland hill sheep grew an immense amount of wool, which the hundreds of hand-loom weavers in Kendal and district had for centuries woven, on their cottage looms, into coarse cloth, the wool having been previously carded and spun by their wives. As taste improved there arose a big demand for this cloth to be dressed by shears and dyed in various colours. The *Boke of Recorde* gives a list of over two hundred "Shearmen Fremen" in 1581-2, showing the trade to have been an important one even at that early date.

During Isaac's early life in Kendal the town must have gained an added lustre and importance by the publication of its first weekly newspaper, the *Kendal Courent*, in 1731.

It is further noted in local chronology that until 1730 potatoes were very sparingly used in Kendal, being seemingly not grown nearer than Kirkby Lonsdale, and that what little coal was used came in by the port of Milnthorpe, the Corporation petitioning in 1727 for an act of Parliament to have "Coles imported duty free at Milthrop."

No doubt Isaac travelled much on horseback, in the northern counties, with saddle-bags, containing his luggage and business patterns. These saddle-bags were still in existence at Castle Mills a few years ago.

A small pocket-book of Isaac Wilson's contains particulars of some of his London journeys, when attendance at Yearly Meeting was combined with business and the execution of various commissions such as the following :

Buy Agnes Goad 6 Silver Table Spoons & a Soup Spoon marked A G.

Buy for George Crosfield 1 of John Woolman's Journals @ 3/6, 2 ditto @ 2/6, 4 ditto for Sedbergh Monthly Meeting.

Buy for Thos Blamire 4 Brief Accts of the People called Quakers their Doctrine & Discipline taken from the Dictionary of Arts & Science.

Buy for Marg't Moore of Thos Killam Fan Church St. London 6-lbs Comn Bohea Tea, 12 ditto @ 6/6, 2 Green @ 14/-.

Make John Elliott & his Wife an offer of the Late John Pace's Silver Tankard if they please to accept the same.

Many Kendal Friends appear to have taken the occasion of Isaac Wilson's visits to London for sending money to their friends there, while London Friends entrusted him with money for their friends in the North.

Considerable banking transactions appear with Smith, Wright and Gray, some of the smaller of them not easily understood in these days, for example:

9 oz. 10 dt. 18 qrs Gold @ 77/- £36.14.4. 2¼ Guins to be Assay^{d} 7/- Cutt Gold 23 oz 18. £92.3. 1 Guinea bad. 0.

There are several notices of purchases in London, such as the following:

Cash paid for an Iron Chest £4.10.0. ditto (later) £3-10.0.
pd Storrs & Christy for a hatt 16/- (repeated later).
pd for 2 small Vols of the Scriptures 7/6.
pd for a Large Bible 18/-.
pd for six spoons £4-11-0.
Expended in coming to Town £7.16.6.

The pocket-book contains at the end two of his different routes from London, one of which is given below:

	Miles.		Miles.
Barnet Red Lion ...	11	Ousley Bridge Saracen's Head	9
St. Albans White Hart ...	10	Sand Dogg in a Dublet ...	8
Redburn Cock	4	Stone Crown	4
Dunstable Sugar Loaf ...	9	Newcastle Row Buck ...	9
Hockley White Horse ...	4	Talketh Hill Swan ...	5
Brickhill George ...	5	Holmes Chippel Red Lion	11
Fenny Stratford Red Lion	2	Knutsford Crown ...	9
Stoney Stratford Cock ...	7	Warrington George ...	11
Towcester White Horse...	8	Wiggan Eagle & Child ...	13
Daventry Wheat Sheaf ...	12	Preston White Horse ...	17
Dun Church Dun Cow ...	8	Garstang Eagle & Child...	11
Coventry King's Head ...	12	Lancaster	11
Meriden Bull's Head ...	7	Kendal	21
Coleshill Swann	5		
Litchfield Swann ...	15		
			258

Motorists will be interested to note how many of these Hotels are still well known.

Most of the merchandise from Kendal was dispatched by pack-horse, either to destination or to the

ports of Whitehaven and Liverpool. The following will give some idea of the business of the town at this time. It is noted that the New Inn alone provided stabling for fifty horses, and that from Bleaze Hall, above Oxenholme, a large carrying business to York and London emanated, stables being provided for fifty horses.

EXTRACT FROM NICHOLSON & BURN'S "HISTORY OF WESTMORLAND & CUMBERLAND" PUBLISHED 1777.

The people of Kendal are generally industrious, so that it is a very rare thing to see any person standing idle, as is too usual in other thorough-fare towns, or other places of public resort. The largeness of their trade may be estimated from the quantity of goods brought into and carried out of this town weekly, by the pack-horse carriers, before the turnpike roads were made, when waggons came in use, whose contents are not so easily calculated.

	Horses.
One gang of pack-horses to and from London every week, of about	20
One gang from Wigan weekly, about	18
One gang from Whitehaven, about	20
From Cockermouth	15
Two gangs from Bernard Castle	26
Two gangs from Penrith, twice a week, about 15 each gang	60
One gang, about 15, from Settle, twice a week ...	30
From York weekly, about	10
From Ulverston	5
From Hawshead, about 6, twice a week	12

	Horses.
From Appleby, about 6, twice a week	12
From Cartmell	6
Two waggons from Lancaster twice a week, computed at 60 horse load	60
Carriages 3 or 4 times a week to and from Milnthorpe, computed at 40 horse load	40
From Sedbergh, Kirkby Lonsdale, Orton, Dent, and other neighbouring villages, about	20
Besides 24 every six weeks from Glasgow ...	354

The most picturesque cavalcade must have been that to Whitehaven, climbing, in all weathers, the steep ascent of Wrynose Pass, descending to the Duddon Valley for a welcome rest, before tackling the steep Hardknot Pass. The joy to both man and beast, when the "Wool Pack" Inn, in Eskdale, with its appropriate name, hove in sight, and a good night's rest could be obtained, can well be imagined. This cavalcade must have been a familiar sight to Isaac Wilson, when, as a small boy, he visited his grandfather, George Benson, at Stang End, Little Langdale, and may have given him thoughts of the prosperous town from which it started.

Extract from "The Annals of Kendal."

A specimen of the large trade carried on in Kendal "Cottons" is ascertained from the Custom-house books at Liverpool. In the year 1770 there were exported to America, from that port alone, between 3000 and 4000 pieces.

CHAPTER III

ISAAC AND RACHEL WILSON

Isaac Wilson,* born 16. 1. 1714/15 } Married
Rachel Wilson,* born 8. 2. 1720 } 18. 12. 1740

THE marriage of Isaac and Rachel Wilson took place on 18. 12. 1740, shortly before Rachel's 21st birthday. As there was a considerable circle of relatives in the district, and Rachel herself had been acknowledged as a Minister at 18, the wedding was doubtless largely attended.

MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE OF ISAAC AND RACHEL WILSON.

(This appears to be written in the excellent hand of John Wilson, Rachel's father.)

Isaac Wilson of Stramongate in Kendal in the County of Westmorland Sheerman Dyer Son of Anthony and Dorothy Wilson of High Wray in the County of Lancaster and Rachel Wilson Daughter of John and Deborah Wilson of Highgate in the said Kendal and County aforesaid Having declared their Intentions of Taking each other in Marriage before several Meetings of the People called Quakers in Kendal aforesaid according to the good order

used among them whose proceedings therein after a deliberate consideration thereof were approved by the said Meetings.

NOW these are to Certify all whom it may Concern That for the full accomplishing of their said Intentions They the said Isaac Wilson and Rachel Wilson appear[d] in a Publick Assembly of the aforesaid People in their Publick Meeting House in Kendal aforesaid the eighteenth Day of the Twelfth month (called February) One Thousand Seven Hundred and Forty where in a Solemn Manner He the said Isaac Wilson taking the said Rachel Wilson by the Hand Openly declared as follows I Isaac Wilson takes thee Rachel Wilson to be my Married Wife, Promising through Divine Assistance to be unto thee a Loving and Faithfull Husband till Death Separate us.

And then and there in the said Assembly Shee the said Rachel Wilson having the said Isaac Wilson by the Hand did in like manner also declare as followeth. I Rachel Wilson takes thee Isaac Wilson to be my Married Husband Promising thro Divine Assistance to be unto thee a Loving and Dutifull Wife [1] till Death Separates us.

And the said Isaac Wilson and Rachel Wilson as a further confirmation thereof did then and there to these presents sett their Hands } Isaac Wilson Rachel Wilson

And we whose names are hereunto subscribed being present among others at the Solemnizing of the said marriage and subscription in manner aforesaid As Witnesses thereunto have also Subscribed our Names the Day and Year above written.

[1] The promise to be a "dutiful" wife appears to be a "half-way house" between the promise of obedience, by her mother, and the equality of promise adopted later.

Anthony Wilson (I's. father)
John Wilson (R's. father)
Deborah Wilson (R's. mother)
John Wilson (I's. brother)
George Wilson (I's. brother)
Thos. Wilson (R's. brother)
Elizabeth Wilson (R's. Aunt)
Roger Wakefield (R's. Br. in Law)
Jon[a]. Wilson (R's. Uncle)
Mary Wakefield (R's. Sister)
Ann Wilson (Wife of John)
Deborah Wilson (R's. Sister)
Elizabeth Hysey (?)
John Crewdson (R's. uncle)
Sarah Wilson
Eliz. Pixley
John Airey
Geo. Dodgson
Sarah Wilson
Dan[ll]. Stephenson
Wm. Longmire
M. Cingays (?)
Thos. Ellwood
Joshua Nelson
George Braithwaite
Joseph Whitelock
James Wilson
John Braithwaite
Henry Scarisbrick
Robt. Charnley
Ann Wilson
Sarah Braithwaite
Mary Wilson
John Ecroyde
James Watterson
Dan[ll]. Stery (?)
James Glover
Isaac Rigge
Thos. Rebanks (Fds. School)
Mary Walker
George Dixon
Margt. Crewdson
Sarah Suartt
Elizabeth Gough
Ruth Braithwaite
Eliz. Stephenson
Margaret Townson

On Isaac's marriage, it is thought that he took his bride to No. 21, Stramongate, which forms part of the Mill property.

There, on 11. 11. 1741, their first little daughter, Dorothy, was born, followed by Deborah, on 13. 12. 1743.

The first record of any incident in the family, after the birth of the first two children, is to be found in a little journal written in Rachel Wilson's scrawly hand and with extraordinarily phonetic spelling, giving the bare day-to-day details of a long journey, lasting

several months. The journey began on 12. 10. 1744, four years after her marriage. Her husband and sister Sarah (afterwards wife of John Birkbeck) accompanied her to Lancaster, where she met her companion, Jane Rowlandson (afterwards Jane Crosfield),[1] who apparently accompanied her on a journey lasting about nine months, visiting many towns in Lancashire, including Liverpool, Warrington, and Manchester ; many in Cheshire, including Chester, where they stayed with " Uncle and Aunt Leadbeter " (? brother or brother-in-law of Rachel's grandmother, Rachel ——), forward through Matlock, Derby, and Burton to Birmingham, Stourbridge, and Worcester, thence by Shrewsbury to Dolobran and through Wales to Carmarthen and Swansea and forward to Bristol and Bath. Thence they turned westward by Bridgwater, Taunton, Minehead, Launceston, and Penzance to Lands End and again eastward by Plymouth, Totnes, Exeter, Poole, Southampton, Godalming and Guildford to London for Yearly Meeting. After this they visited the Eastern Counties, Chelmsford, Colchester, Ipswich, Woodbridge, Norwich and Spalding, where the journal comes to an abrupt end, at the end of August, or early September, possibly on receipt of news of an expected march southward of Prince Charlie's troops, which made a rapid return home only natural.

[1] This early close association between his family's two 3/great grandmothers, 180 years ago, is naturally of great interest to the writer.

These were two quite young women travelling, presumably, on horseback and alone, except for kind Friends who entertained them everywhere, and accompanied them, by arrangement, on the next stage of their journey. Meetings were held in hosts of small places, beside those mentioned above. The only place visited where a Meeting is not mentioned is Lands End, which, presumably, was visited on "a day off."

Among other well-known Friends with whom they stayed the following are noted: Samuel Fothergill, Wm. Rathbone, Abraham Darby, John Corbyn, Richard and James Hingston, Francis Fox, Joseph Ransom, Thos. Grubb, Jonathan and Joseph Peckover, Mary Gurney.

Then came stirring times in 1745, when Prince Charles Edward, with six thousand Scotch "Rebels," appeared in the quiet little town in far larger force than the incursion well remembered in 1715.

The following summarizes the account given in *The Annals of Kendal*:

> The rebel army, about 6,000 strong, under the command of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, reached Kendal, on its progress southward, on the evening of November 22nd., and halted over the 24th. (Sunday). The principal officers attended divine service in the Church, which was performed by Mr. Crackenthorp, Master of the Grammar School, Dr. Symonds, the Vicar, having quitted the town through fear.

Little or no addition to their numbers took place in Westmorland, whilst, by the time they reached Derby, the Royalist Army, under the Duke of Cumberland, had become strongly reinforced, and was marching to meet the enemy, who beat a prudent retreat. On December 13th. 100 horse of the Duke of Perth's establishment reached Kendal. This, being market day, led to confusion in the streets, and some stray shots were fired, one trooper and a farmer being killed. Later, the main body entered the town, and subjected the magistrates to a penalty of £150. The Pretender again slept in the house in Stricklandgate (now known as Prince Charlie's House, the Y.W.C.A. Institute), the same bed being occupied the next night by the Duke of Cumberland. On their weary march northward the Scotch troops abandoned some of their heavy ammunition, some of which was found about 1900, near the side of the old road, on the steep hill to the west of Forest Hall, 6 miles north of Kendal. The next day witnessed the defeat of the Scotch at Clifton Dykes near Penrith.

There is romance about many old high roads ; but where will you find more romance than in the road pushing northward from Kendal ? Go, some bright day, up the nineteenth-century coaching road, and as you get a few miles from the town, don't look only at the glorious view of the lake mountains, or into the depths of the lovely valley of Longsleddale ; but notice, as you move northward, the many traces of the old, rugged road, which was the forerunner of the great coaching road, and went straight up hill-sides, which the coach road skirts at a nice

gradient. Continue your way, watching the old road, crossing and re-crossing the modern one, till you descend by a steep drop, to the Borrow Valley and High Borrow Bridge. On arriving there, go two hundred yards up the turbulent beck and stand on the old bridge, and try to picture to yourself what romance that bridge has seen. Think of Prince Charlie and his six thousand followers, horse and foot, filing down the long valley running northwards ; of their high hopes, wild Highland songs, and skirling of the pipes ; and then look at the steep grassy road coming over the hill to the south and picture the broken remnant, footsore, weary and dispirited, toiling down the slope, after dropping many cannon balls at the foot of the steep ascent from the Bannisdale Valley, through sheer weariness. Picture them stopping to quench their thirst and their horses' thirst at the stream, and crossing the bridge, with its memories of high hopes, now shattered.

Look also a hundred yards above the bridge and think of the romance hidden in that little, old, half-ruined inn. Think of the nights, when the innkeeper and hostlers were waked from their sleep by the shouts of post-boys and the clatter of hoofs coming down that steep hill-side and over the old bridge, men and horses tired, with the heavy going on those rough steep roads, since their last stop at Kendal ; of the two anxious-looking young people who step out from

the chaise and make hurried inquiries whether fresh horses are available, for the tremendous pull up Shap Fells, which in the dim morning light they see in front of them ; and whether a hasty meal is forthcoming in the meantime. Think, too, how anxiously they would scan the steep road to southward, for any sign of their parental pursuers, and with what hope they would start off, if they had obtained the only fresh horses in the stable.

Or, if you prefer quieter thoughts, think of the old Quakers, men and women, on their horses, with saddle-bags, in their sober attire, crossing the bridge and stopping for rest and refreshment at the little inn, no hurry or anxiety in *their* eyes, but a calm dwelling in the Spirit and a certainty that the Message, which they were to deliver across the border, would be given to them in due time.

Mr. Curwen in *Kirkbie Kendall*, in describing Stramongate, gives Isaac Wilson's connection with "the 45" :

Extract from "Kirkbie Kendall," Published 1900.

Crossing the road again to the southern side we come to the old family residence of the Wilson family. It was in the possession of Isaac Wilson when Prince Charlie passed through in 1745, and the officers were quartered here.

The late Alderman J. J. Wilson says that the house has to all practical purposes been re-built since those days,

seeing that it has had a new front, new back, new roof, a large central chimney stack removed, and most of the floors re-laid. In the yard behind, however, there is still to be

W.

seen a leaden cistern bearing the initials and date I. S.

1781.

for John and Sarah Wilson.

How interesting it would be if any record had been preserved of the Highlanders' visit. We can only faintly imagine what it must have meant to Isaac and Rachel. The spare rooms at Stramongate were usually inhabited by quiet Quaker relatives, or still more quiet "visiting Friends" in their sombre, old-world attire. Now for these are substituted rollicking Highland officers, with their feathered bonnets, their bright tartans, jewelled brooches, sporrans and strong, bare legs: the clank of their dirks and swords; their loud voices, often raised in dispute in an unknown tongue, and in execration of their "King's" enemies. The Highlander is, however, a natural gentleman, and we can imagine he would treat his sweet young Quaker hostess with chivalry, and would soon make friends with Dorothy and Deborah, aged 4 and 2½, who would no doubt be vastly interested in his strange equipment.

Little is known of the entertainment offered to the Highland officers at Stramongate; but a story is handed down of a large rabbit pie, encased by

crust (on the Melton Mowbray pattern). The Highlanders discarded the crust and, having demolished the rabbit, sent the pie out, with the request "fill up the waus (walls)." Whether the request could be complied with does not appear.

This reminds the writer of another celebrated Kendal pie of much later date, the details of which appeared in the *London Standard* of 1841. This pie was provided at the King's Arms, Kendal, "among the delicacies of the dinner of the Commercial Travellers' Association, on Christmas Eve."

> The pie contained two fat geese, two large turkeys, four fowls, two pheasants, four grouse, two hens, four prize rabbits, three tongues, and eight pounds of beef steak and ham. Its circumference measured seven feet, it was ten inches in depth, and weighed 5 st. 8 lbs.

To return to the home life of Isaac and Rachel, it is noted that :

On 18. 5. 1746 another daughter, Rachel, was born, and on 30. 4. 1748, they had the joy of welcoming their first son, John, who alone carried down the family name.

On 15. 8. 1750 another son, Anthony, was born, and on 8. 4. 1753 Elizabeth.

The deaths of parents, during the early fifties, must have fallen sadly upon Isaac and Rachel, and

deprived all their younger children of the knowledge of the happy relationship between a child and its grandparents.

Rachel's father, John Wilson, died at Kendal in 1752, and her mother, Deborah, in 1754, to be followed early in 1755 by the death of Anthony and Dorothy at High Wray, within a month of each other. The later children of Isaac and Rachel were :

30. 8. 1755, Mary
In 1757 Isaac was born and died in 4 months.
11. 6. 1759, Sarah,
8. 2. 1761, Margaret.

Looking through the names in a family, it appears to have been an almost universal rule to call the first boys by the names of their grandfathers and the first girls by those of their grandmothers, afterwards the fathers and mothers are remembered. Rachel Wilson was doubtless named after the wife of Thomas Wilson, her maternal grandfather. In the published pedigree the maiden name of this original Rachel is not given and the writer has been unable to trace it.

Another thing which strikes one is how entirely, in early days, single names were the rule. Out of one hundred and thirty-one witnesses of three Friends' weddings from 1713 to 1740, examined, there is not a single case of a second Christian name,

whilst so late as 1808 the certificate of marriage of Isaac Wilson and Mary Jowitt only contains three double names out of seventy-seven.

Probably, in time, all of the children of Isaac and Rachel attended the Friends' schools, which had been established half a century before (1698). In Kendal, the children had only one family of first cousins, the children of Roger Wakefield and Mary Wilson, Rachel's sister, born from 1741 to 1753, and one of second cousins, the children of John Crewdson, but in the district there were other families of cousins, Bensons in Little Langdale, Waithmans at Lindeth (Silverdale), John Wilsons at Preston Patrick, and George Wilsons at High Wray. There were doubtless interchanges of visits between these families, but the conditions of travel made *long* journeys impossible, and even Settle—with its Birkbeck cousins—must have seemed almost out of reach.

In this connection it may be mentioned that the first turnpike roads were opened in the district in 1752. The first post-chaise was introduced in Kendal for hire in 1754, while in 1757, the first stage-wagons arrived in the town from London, gradually to displace the pack-horses as carriers.

The excitement of the young people must have been intense when in 1763, the first stage-coach from London, "the Flying Machine," arrived in the town. One can imagine the rush of children

to see this wonderful sight, the six-horse coach rattling up the narrow, cobbled streets, the leaders controlled by a postilion, and the remainder driven "four-in-hand" from the box. This must have seemed to them the last word in rapid locomotion, although a large basket fastened behind, which represented the second-class accommodation, must have left something to be desired in comfort.

Another event which must have been full of interest and delight was the last procession of the Kendal Trades Guild which took place in 1759.

EXTRACT FROM "THE ANNALS OF KENDAL."

Formerly the town had its Guild processions, as was the custom in most manufacturing towns. The last Guild celebrated here was on the 4th. 5th. and 6th. of June, 1759, and was carried to such an extravagant height of splendour that it is said, many of the tradesmen were nearly ruined by the expenses, and the festival has ever since been discontinued.

Then follows a flowery poem describing the procession, which consisted of the following: 100 woolcombers, 150 tailors, 80 shearmen-dyers, 300 weavers, 100 shoe makers, 80 ironmongers and mettlemen, 60 tanners, 100 builders, 70 glovers and skinners.

Whether Isaac the Quaker took part in the procession and rejoicing seems doubtful, but there can be little doubt that the young family in Stra-

mongate enjoyed the procession as it passed the house.

In 1763, life began in earnest for the son John, as the following indenture, now framed at Castle Mills, Kendal, shows. The signatures below are those of John Wilson, in a good, bold hand, and Isaac Wilson, with unusual flourish. Witnesses—Mary Wakefield, Rachel Wilson's sister, and Thomas Harrison, a well-known Kendal lawyer.

This Indenture made the twenty sixth day of September in the third year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third, by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King Defender of the Faith and so forth, and in the year of our Lord One Thousand Seven hundred and sixty three, Between John Wilson, son of Isaac Wilson of Kirkby Kendal, in the County of Westmorland, Shearmandyer of the one part, and the said Isaac Wilson of the other part.

Witnesseth that the said John Wilson of his own free and voluntary will, and with the consent of the said Isaac Wilson his Father, testified by his being made a party to and sealing and delivering of these Presents, doth put and bind himself apprentice to and with the said Isaac Wilson, and after the Manner of an Apprentice to dwell and continue with and serve him the said Isaac Wilson, his Father, from the Day of the Date of these Presents for during and unto the full End and Term of Seven Years from thenceforth next ensuing and fully to be compleat and ended. During all which said Term he the said John Wilson the said Isaac Wilson well and faithfully shall serve his Secrets, shall keep his Commands lawful and

honest every where shall do. Fornication he shall not commit nor Matrimony with any Woman contract during the said Term. Hurt to his said Father and Master he shall not do or consent to be done, but the same to the utmost of his Power shall prevent. Taverns or Alehouses or any other Place of Idleness he shall not frequent. At Cards, Dice or any other unlawful Games he shall not play; The Goods of his said Father and Master he shall not inordinately use, nor the same shall waste nor them to any lend without his said Father and Master's Leave with his own proper goods or any others during the said Term without the special Licence of his said Father and Master; he shall not merchandize from his service; he shall not depart or absent himself without Leave, but in all Things shall behave himself as a good and faithful Apprentice ought to do. And the said Isaac Wilson doth hereby for himself, his Executors and Administrators covenant promise and agree to and with the said John Wilson That during all the said Term of Seven Years he, the said Isaac Wilson shall and will well diligently and carefully teach, instruct and inform or cause to be well, diligently and carefully taught, instructed and informed the said John Wilson in the Trade Art Mistery or Occupation of a Shearmandyer which he now useth according to the best of his Skill and Knowledge therein and in due and reasonable Manner chastise and correct him; And that he, the said Isaac Wilson, his Executors and Administrators shall and will at all Times during the said Term of Seven Years find and provide for the said John Wilson his Son the Apprentice, good wholesome and sufficient Meat, Drink, Washing and Lodging, and also all and all Manner of Cloaths and Apparel, both Linen and Woolen, and Shoes suitable to his Degree and Business. In Witness

whereof the said Parties to these Presents have hereunto set their Hands and Seals the Day and Year first above written.

Sealed and Delivered (being duly stamped) In the Presence of us

Mary Wakefield.
Thomas Harrison.

John Wilson.
Isaac Wilson.

The first marriage in the family took place in 1765, the eldest daughter, Dorothy, being married to John Whitwell of Kendal; and in 1767 the second daughter, Deborah, was married to George Braithwaite of Kendal.

According to views handed down, the seven daughters of Isaac and Rachel were unusually handsome girls, but such matters were seldom mentioned in Quaker circles in those days, and it is difficult to obtain confirmation of this from letters read, except the partial letter of a young man proposing marriage and one from an American friend, Deborah Morris, in which she says, "I often remember with sweetness a Pretty Circle round thy parlour in which I sat, and I hope for their present and future well being, for I love them."

The writer wishes it were possible to give any account of the home life of the "seven sisters," before the first break of the circle by marriage in 1765. It would be interesting to know how girls in a Quaker household, one hundred and sixty years

ago, occupied their time. Worldliness, which term would include music, novel reading, and elaborate fancy work, in which so much of the time of Jane Austen's women was taken up, would be out of the question. On the other hand there were no careers for women, no public philanthropic activities, no Sunday Schools, no missionary organizations, no hospitals, welfare committees, charity organization societies, or the manifold helpful works in which the girls of later generations have done so much, and there were, of course, no outdoor games. What then made up the life of these girls? Probably the elder ones did some housework, making and mending their own very plain Quakerly clothes, and those of the younger ones, and their father's and brothers' underwear; superintending the little ones in their lessons, running the house in their mother's frequent absences, and, as children of intelligent parents, keeping up their own education by solid reading. They doubtless took an interest in their poorer neighbours, and in the absence of the modern institution of district nurses, probably gave their help in nursing the sick and preparing simple remedies for them. Their associations were largely confined to Friends, but among these there were doubtless tea drinkings, with writing games and harmless gossip, and they were not immune from taking an interest in the young men of their limited acquaintance.

Possibly, they would experience a thrill from a different world, occasionally, by the then common sight of a runaway couple, passing rapidly through the streets, and quickly changing horses in the town, with a wild rush to Gretna Green in their hopes, and the fear of pursuit and prevention in their eyes.

This sight must have been exciting to young folks, to note the rapidity with which the hostlers unharnessed the horses, whilst others rushed up the inn yard to bring fresh ones, soon seen galloping down harnessed, and as the last buckles were fastened the rewards of golden guineas were freely showered and the couple were off, with a cheer from the bystanders, whose sympathy was generally with the runaways and seldom with their pursuers, who often put in an appearance not long after, when there was another scene of bustle and reward.

That Kendal offered gaieties, at this time, to less unworldly families than the Quakers there can be no doubt ; its distance from London made the question of travelling there almost an impossibility, so, instead of a town house in London, many of the richer county families had a town house in Kendal, to which they betook themselves for the winter months and a gay time.

High floods from the River Kent, have always been a great delight and excitement to the young people of the town, who did not share the anxieties of their elders. Such floods occurred on October

13, 1771, and October 29, 1772, and one can imagine the interest with which Isaac Wilson's family watched the rapidly rising water, and speculated upon the delightful chance of its reaching their home, which it seems probable that it did, as we note in *Kirkbie Kendall* that the following was recorded, upon a cottage window-pane, at the back of the house with double steps (just below St. George's Hall) :

On the 13th day of October 1771, The Flood rose To the Mark on The window Fraims which was cut with a knife and was on The Sabeth Day The flood was in the Meeting hous so That They could not atend That Fornoon which was niver known this 83 years. At that Time The Meeting hous was building (1688).

P.S. On the 29th Day of October 1772, The flood rose to within a Insh or Thereabouts as mentioned above.

CHAPTER IV

RACHEL WILSON'S JOURNEYS

As has been already stated, Rachel Wilson was acknowledged as a Minister of the Society of Friends when 18 years of age, and from that time forward, after her marriage, notwithstanding the claims of her household and large family, she not only took her share of ministry at Kendal, and the smaller meetings in the district, but travelled widely in the British Isles, where she became well known as an able and convincing preacher, whole-hearted in the service of her Master.

It would be impossible to give full details of her various journeys before her visit to America, but the following is of interest, as an example of these.

From *Record of Friends Travelling in Ireland, 1656 to 1765*, the following is extracted :

1754. 5 month, 7th, Rachel Wilson of Kendal in Westmorland, stayed first day Meetings, second day went to Bandon, third day to Kinsale, at each of which had a meeting to good satisfaction, returned same day and had a meeting 4th day at Corke to good satisfaction, and next day went to the Pro. Meeting at Waterford. She was an able and skilful Minister, and deeply read in the Mysteries of the Kingdom.

Letters of Rachel Wilson's to her young friend, Mary Colsworthy (afterwards Mary Ware or Were), make it evident that the thought of visiting America had been before her for some time. On 4. 12. 1767 she writes :

May we ever be resigned to an all-wise disposing hand and stand open to the pointings out of best Wisdom, though it may lead in the way of the Cross. I have often desired of late that the near & dear connections in life, of which I have my share above many, may never prevail, so as to prevent my coming up in the little service called for at my hand, & an humbling time it hath been to me, the prospect before me at times awful. I've almost hourly a distant shore before my view, as if my lot must be to visit the Churches in America. I cannot say but a view of this sort hath attended for many years, though at a distance in point of time, yet it now seems to draw near ; and though it hath been kept pretty much within my own breast, I could not longer let it remain with ease, without giving thee a hint thereof, as thou hast been frequently brought before the view of my mind & I know no one I could so freely unite in this weighty service as thyself. I cannot but earnestly desire thy deliberate consideration thereof & if something of the same thing hath attended thy mind, it would contribute to my satisfaction to be acquainted thereof, as soon as can do it with freedom. I would have this kept within thy own breast, at least for a while, though if the concern increase with me, as it hath done for some time, it will not be meet to delay many months without laying it before Friends & leave it to their determining, which I ever desire to acquiesce with. . . .

The year following the writing of this letter Rachel Wilson seems to have felt that the time had come when her American visit should be no longer delayed. Her husband, who was himself a "well-concerned" Friend, approved the step, and undertook the responsibility of looking after the family in her absence, with the help of his daughter Rachel, aged 22, her two married sisters in the town, and their Aunt Mary Wakefield, now a widow. The remaining children were John, 20; Anthony, 17; Elizabeth 15; Mary, 12; Sarah, 9; and Margaret, 7.

The large stores provided for Friends crossing to America in old days have often been the subject of comment, but were doubtless not the gauge of a large appetite, but something in the nature of insurance against starvation, should the voyage be greatly prolonged, through the ship being driven far out of her course by contrary winds. Such a case is recorded where the Friends and crew were reduced to eating rats and drinking the water they could collect on deck. It is also understood that the captain and ship's officers expected to share the provisions of their passengers—alcohol especially. As Rachel Wilson subsisted mainly, on her outward voyage, on water porridge, the following list must have provided pleasant fare for others aboard. The alcohol was, of course, in those days considered as necessary as food.

STORES FOR OUR FRIEND R. WILSON PROVIDED BY M. A.

30 Fowles
12 Ducks
4 Hams
2 doz. Madeira Wine
2 Bottles Jam[ca]. Spirit
Keg W I Rum
4 Bottles Brandy
2 do Vinegar
6 lbs. Rusks
2 lbs. Maple Biscuits
3 do. Ginger Bread
8 do. Raisons
½ lb. Singlo Tea
2 lbs. Ground Coffee
2 do Chocolate
1 Loaf D Refined Sugar
1 do M „ do
14 lbs. Musco Sugar
Peck Cranberries
2 Quarts Oatmeal
6 lbs. Rice
5 Bush[ls]. Indian Corn
100 Eggs

The writer has read with much interest the transcript of Rachel Wilson's American Journal, kindly lent by Mr. J. B. Braithwaite. The Journal is scrappy in character, being written in the intervals of incessant meetings and hard travel, and Rachel Wilson's innate modesty never makes it appear that her meetings and reception were anything out of the common. She seems to have been filled with the spirit of her Master, Christ, and whenever the message given to her was well received, no part of the message was considered as her own. She seems to have been generally very well and courteously treated and helped, not only by Friends, but by many of other denominations ; Baptists and Presbyterians especially placed their chapels at the service of her and her friends, and not infrequently there

were " Priests " present, who received her message in a friendly and Christian spirit. In the intervals of the continual meetings, Rachel Wilson visited many lonely Friends' houses, and innumerable sick, aged, and infirm. She was entertained by Friends, wherever these were to be found, and after most meals had a " short opportunity " with the family, a practice which in these busy days seems to have largely died out. In speaking exclusively to Friends, she spoke strongly on the inadvisability of " mixed marriages."

The Journal begins 7th month, 25th, 1768.

Left home, my husband accompanying me to Lancaster. About 4 next morning the Coach came, in which were six passengers for Warrington, where we dined at the Inn, drinking tea at cousin Whitwell's.

She proceeded by Middlewich, Lichfield, Coventry, Stowe, and Dunstable, meeting with many Friends by the way and arriving in London on the 29th, being met by R. Chester. "About three went with R. Chester, S. Fisher and S. Wagstaff on board the Pennsylvania Packet (Capt. Falkner)," with which she was much pleased. " On first day attended both meetings at Gracechurch Street." The next few days were spent in London, with visits to Upton, Clapham, Plaistow, Wandsworth and Tottenham, dining with Cousin Jane

Forster, " who at present hath a fine school," and in continual meetings. On 6th day

Many friends dined with us at our quarters and came to bid farewell in great love. We parted on 7th day, Landlord Chester and his wife brought me in their chariot to Gravesend 22 miles, many other friends also accompanying us. The vessel not being down I found an engagement upon my mind to have a meeting. The Magistrates granted the Town Hall for the meeting at 10, to which a great number of the inhabitants came.

This was followed at 5 by another meeting " which was much crowded and many more had to leave, there being no room." The Packet was detained by contrary winds.

In the evening I was but poorly, the leaving of my Friends and the thought of so long a voyage sank in my mind, with the humbling views of my unfitness for such an undertaking, but merciful goodness was pleased to interpose for my help. . . .

Some of the Friends accompanied them to the Downs, where there was a smart gale. Later they departed.

I was just able to get upon deck as their company was agreeable and helpful, and it made the parting more affecting, which was in great love and near sympathy with each other. We were now left William Coulman, S. Fisher, Sam Buck and myself; no other female on board; a little hard, yet it was made abundantly easier than I could

expect. S. Fisher's tenderness was great, omitting nothing he could do to make everything easy and agreeable. I grew better of my sickness and bore up tolerably. On 6th day, Friends from Dover and Deal came to see us on board.

On " first day " crowded meetings were held at Deal, with Friends from Dover and Folkestone, and in the afternoon, a large meeting in the Town Hall where, in a crowded meeting, " Merciful goodness graciously favoured in opening the way of Life and Salvation to the people." In consequence of contrary winds the party does not seem to have got really off till the 24th. In the intervals of rough weather and sea-sickness, many meetings were held on board, at which many of the sailors attended and behaved well.

On 14. 10. 1768, they took a pilot on board, within the Capes of Delaware, and in the evening, cast anchor in the bay, and proceeded to Newcastle, Wilmington and Philadelphia, having a kind welcome from Friends in each place.

Some incidents of her southern journey are thus described in her Journal :

12th Month, 16*th*, 1768.

On 6th day morning we set forward on our journey, though the prospect was very discouraging. The snow was so thick, and the trees so laden, that many were broken down, and the road was almost stopped up in places. My horse being full of spirit rushed through the snow, that I

often was in danger of being thrown off, and before I had ridden a mile, a large tree, under which there was not room for him and me to pass, took me quite off. I fell into a hollow way with my head down, where I must have perished, if help had not been at hand. But my kind companion was soon off his horse, ready to assist, and, being strong and willing to exert himself for my relief, soon got me out of the snow, and I found myself able to walk, though my leg was much crushed. I got on my horse and made a shift to ride 15 miles to one Samuel Woods, that kept an inn, where they behaved kindly, and I had my leg bathed and gave it what relief I could. Having a mind to sit with the neighbours that were inclined to come, notice was given, and a large meeting we had in the evening, which the great Master was pleased to own with his presence, to our admiration and comfort.

What a finish to such a day !

12th Month, 24th, 1768.

. . That evening we reached Richard Kirby's, 15 miles, had a meeting with them on 2nd morning, to which many of the neighbours came, to their comfort and edification ; being like the thirsty ground, they drank in the rain with eagerness. That evening had a Meeting at William Pain's, 5 miles, though heavy rain, yet many attended, tho' I thought not so open as in the morning, yet the people seemed well satisfied, as some necessary truths were opened to them. William Pain set us to the river Don (12 miles) which we ferryed over, without much danger, though the water was high and the current rapid. We could not cross Hoggins Creek at the usual place, the waters were so high, yet we went a bye path that night, 15 miles, in the woods with some difficulty, and lodged

with a friendly man, a Presbyterian, whose name was Robert Hutfield, his son was remarkably kind and wished it had been in his power to have done better for us; he gave up his own bed for my companion and me and spread skins upon the ground for Samuel, Micaiah and himself, that we put on tolerably well. In the morning he helped us over Hoggins Creek, he swam our horses and we went over on a log tho' not without fear; our saddle bags being first borne over: after we got well to the main road, but the heavy rains had made them deep and troublesome.

12th Month, 28th, 1768.

After we had rode about 4 miles we called to enquire the way, and whether through mistake or designedly, we were turned out of the way and road, till we came to where we apprehended we should have crossed How River, but upon inquiry found we had come 4 miles out of our road, in heavy rain; at the same time fearing the river would be impassable made it painful work, yet there was no time to hesitate, that we made the best of our way through the rain and got safe over the river though much wet, the water was so high that it came up on leg, above the ankle. We called at a little house on the other side but could get no refreshment, yet dried ourselves a little and went to an Inn 4 miles, where we fared pretty well, and went 4 miles further to lodge, which looked discouraging at our first entrance, but they improved and grew very kind and did their best for us, and the landlord seemed desirous of a little conversation with us about the points wherein we differed from them, and as he seemed rather to speak for information than to guile, I found free to answer both to that of Baptism and the supper, with which he seemed satisfied, and I quite easy in my mind.

By degrees she made her way south to Charlestown, riding forty-five miles the day of her arrival there. In one instance she writes of fifty miles for two days together, but at Charlestown, where she seems to have been thrown more among the "grand and great," she had easier conveyance, and writes of thirty miles in a Friend's "Chair."

Extract from a letter written from Charlestown (S. Carolina), 2nd month, 1769 :

The fall I had from my horse was not one of the least, as my leg was much bruised and the skin broke, yet I bore riding pretty well, that we did not lie by any on that account, though many thought I must have rested before it would be healed ; had not faith been strong, I had certainly fainted (? been faint hearted). I cannot help viewing it almost next to a miracle myself, that I was able to get along so well, under such a great disadvantage, scarcely able to point the ground with one foot for a month—in a poor part of the country, where we did not abound with many superfluities in either meat or drink, yet preserved in patience and resignation to the Divine will, believing that all things would work together for good, which we had evidently experienced in all our steppings along, under every trial. . . .

We have had several meetings here to satisfaction ; the hearts of the people seem open to receive us, and the doctrine we have to deliver, both in public and private, having been favoured in many families of what is called the greater sort ; that we cannot but acknowledge we have met with an opened door, more than I expected in this place, being very much cast down on my coming here,

under a sense of my own weakness, which I ever desire to be thoroughly acquainted with, in order that my dependence may be entirely upon Him that is alone sufficient for every engagement He calls to. - - - It is certainly doing the will whereby we come to know more and more of the Heavenly doctrine. It's work I love, that of visiting families, believing it to be of singular service to the Church, where it is rightly gone about and entered into.

In Philadelphia she had addressed a meeting of Negroes. At the Quarterly Meeting at New River

I had earnestly to desire we might walk worthy of the vocation whereunto we were called in all humility and fear, and also to request them to keep their hands clear from purchasing Negroes, as believing it never was intended for us to traffick with any part of the human species, and, if there were no buyers, there would be no sellers, that, where they were numerous, religion was at a low ebb.

EDENTOWN, *3rd Month, 3rd,* 1769.

We dined at Francis Nixon's; crossed Perquiman's River; he accompanied us, and Thomas Newby took me in his chair to Edentown, 18 miles; lodged at an Inn; had a Meeting in the Court House, they seemed a rawe people not used to waiting in silence, and stayed about the door for a while, till desired to come in. I was soon engaged in supplication, by which they were a little settled, yet not much reached to, though before the Meeting was ended, truth gained ground and they seemed solid and many expressed their satisfaction. After which we dined at an ordinary, where I was concerned at table.

There were two priests who behaved civilly, as did the whole company, and seemed desirous of our longer stay.

3rd Month, 22nd, 1769.

We had two Meetings here in a house formerly used as a Playhouse. The people light and airy, yet I hope truth gained ground, and several expressed their satisfaction with the Meetings. One woman particularly acknowledged her thankfulness for the opportunity that the Lord had put it into our hearts to visit them, a people so much taken up with the pleasures of the world. We had a solemn season with her in her own house, and two more of note that came and drank tea with us there; bid them farewell in great love, their good wishes attending us. I also went with Edward Hobler to visit the Governor, who received us kindly and seemed well satisfied with the conversation. He took his leave affectionately and wished my journey might be prosperous.

It was on her return journey to the north that she called upon Patrick Henry, the distinguished Virginia Statesman, at this time 32 years old, but already famous for his Stamp Act speech of 1765. The entry in her Journal is as follows :

3rd Month, 31st, 1769.

On our return to our quarters at night, we called by the way to see one of the Assembly Men, who was a man of great moderation, and had appeared in Friends' favour. His name is Patrick Henry. He received us with great civility, and we had an open time in his family, after which he made some sensible remarks.

4th Month, 9th, 1769.

Came to Chester Town, 17 miles, where we had a meeting at the Court House which was large and solemn, in which Christ was preached as the way, the truth and the life.

4th Month, 13th, 1769.

K. Fisher met me and brought me several letters from my dear husband and children, which gave me great relief.

On 7th day we rode up to Philadelphia; my kind landlady, Mary Harvey, took me with her in her Chair, where Friends seemed generally glad to see me returned safe, from so exposing a journey, in which we had travelled about 2700 miles and not hindered two days in the whole journey, for which Merciful preservation may the Great Name be praised to whom it is due.

At Burlington (5th month, 18th, 1769) a young man under sentence of death sent a request that she would visit him, which she did.

I said what was opened in my mind, and after engaged to go on my knees, which the poor creature joined with, though heavily laden with irons, and acknowledged his thankfulness for the visit. It was indeed affecting to see him in that situation, his coffin standing by, shocking to human nature. We had a solemn season in the Governor's house, with which they expressed their satisfaction.

The following, which appeared in the Bulletin of the Friends' Historical Society of Philadelphia, Vol. 8, No. 1, together with many extracts from the Journal, some of which have been already quoted,

is of interest, as reflecting the opinions of others upon Rachel Wilson's American journey :

Rachel Wilson was recorded a Minister when 18, and in the course of her life travelled considerably in the Ministry. In 1768 she visited America. She landed at Philadelphia 16.10.1768, and remained " in the Colonies " a few weeks over a year. Her journey in America was performed almost entirely upon horseback. It was a journey of many thousand miles, through districts then very imperfectly cleared, in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia, N. & S. Carolina, New York and New England. Her simple narative, (still preserved among the family records,) gives a vivid picture of the toil and occasional peril then to be encountered in passing through dense forests, in some places almost impenetrable, in the fording of deep rivers, where the horses were often obliged to swim, and in many other hardships.

A request of Princeton Students to Rachel Wilson of Kendal.

Nassan Hall,
May 20th, 1769.

Madam,

We whose names are subscribed students of the College of New Jersey, would regard it as a singular obligation if you would favour us with a sermon on Monday next, at whatever time of the day you may be pleased to appoint as most suitable. Some circumstances render it in some measure difficult for us to do ourselves the pleasure of hearing you tomorrow. Your compliance, Madam, will be most gratefully acknowledged by your humble servants. (Here follow 51 signatures.)

The following extract from her Journal is the only known reference which Rachel Wilson makes to her Princeton visit :

Was at meeting at Trentown, it being Court-time many of the Lawyers came and great was the favour extended to us that day. Dined at Wm. Morris' where we had a seasonable opportunity at table. After came to Isaac Clark's, 11 miles, lodged there. In the morning had some service. Before we came away visited Sam Worth who was in a fever. Was at Stony Brook meeting which was much crowded with all sorts of people, where divine goodness was graciously pleased to reach to many, with His Living Powerful truth, to strengthening of our faith in His own Divine arm. Finding myself not quite clear, appointed a meeting at half-past four, which was held in the College, to pretty good satisfaction, though so crowded that a good part stood. The Students behaved well, and several of them came and spoke to me. After we lodged with Joseph Homer, dined with Richard Stockden—a lawyer, who, with his wife, was very kind.

Extracts from letters of John Pemberton, one of her travelling companions, to his wife :

New London, *6th month, 6th,* 1769.

Friend Wilson likes brother Israel's horse well. We were at two meetings last 6th day, and one on 7th day, and rode about 38 or 40 miles.

Newport, *6th month, 13th,* 1769.

The yearly meeting here ended last evening - - - - . It is thought to have been the largest meeting known for many years ; the house here is very large, but could not contain the people by a great number. Great numbers

not professing with us attended and behaved with sobriety and solid attention in the general, and Friend Wilson was favoured to speak to them with clearness and Divine authority. She is favoured with a strong constitution, and supported greatly; and she omits no opportunity of discharging herself, and is happily preserved, solid and watchful, and her offerings, both public and private, seasoned with the salt of the covenant. - - - - I was a little spent last night with the long meetings we have had from day to day, beginning generally at 7 in the morning, and little intermission till night.

Among other work which Rachel Wilson undertook when in Rhode Island was the settlement of a long-standing dispute, which had brought discredit upon the Society. Moses Brown (a member of the Assembly, and a great philanthropist, the benefactor of Brown University), who was present at the inquiry, wrote his recollections of it long afterwards, from which the following is extracted:

To the credit of Rachel Wilson, and the influence of her Divine Master, this settlement was made, for it was through her wise and discreet management and influence, she prevailed on Stephen Hopkins [1] and me to undertake to go and attend to the business. It was my lot to examine the record, and, in so doing, a worthy man, then a Minister, Elisha (? Elihu) Coleman, was cleared of the charge made against him, which fully paid me for my trouble and care in the business at the time, which I mention to the memory of Rachel Wilson, as without her favoured

[1] The Stephen Hopkins mentioned was four times Governor of Rhode Island, Chief Justice, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

influence as an instrument, the work would not have been effected. She was indeed a wise and favoured Minister, and an apostle of usefulness to me.

Rachel Wilson visited some meetings in New York on her return journey to Philadelphia, a record of which is a tract bearing the following title :

A Discourse delivered on Saturday, the 10th of August, 1769, at the Friends' Meeting House in Beekman's Precinct, Dutches County, in the province of New York, by the celebrated Rachel Wilson (one of the people called Quakers) to a numerous audience of different persuasions. (Taken in shorthand from the mouth of the speaker, by one of the Audience).

Isaac Wilson, in writing from Kendal to Rachel's companion, John Pemberton, 22nd, 3rd month, 1770, adds :

I hope our rejoicing on this occasion has not been without fear and trembling, which has covered some of our minds at times, under a sense of the many preservations, both by sea and land, and how wonderfully she was furnished with ability, both inwardly and outwardly, to get through the arduous engagement in so short a time, much less than I expected on her setting out. - - - It is now about three months since my dear reached her own habitation in less than six weeks from the time of her leaving Philadelphia, and since her return she has been favoured with as good a state of health as at any time since we first joined hands, very little, if any, impaired in her bodily strength, which is what I could not have expected, but rather that after she had settled at home, she would find the effects of so close and almost incessant

labour, but very little of this has happened, and all our family have been favoured with the like enjoyment, which is a blessing highly to be prized. - - - -

Rachel Wilson concluded her Journal as follows :

My husband met me at Lancaster, where we parted, and great was the thankfulness that filled both our minds under a sense of the many preservations both by sea and land. I found all my children favoured with health. My husband had not had one day's illness during my absence, nor I whilst on the continent of America.

Among the old family papers examined by the writer are the Certificates of Ministers and Elders in London, 8. 8. 1768, approving Rachel Wilson's Concern to visit American Friends, and a paper giving details of the 15 Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meetings at which her Certificate was read. There are also original Certificates to Kendal Monthly Meeting from the following Meetings, showing, though in the usual very restrained language of Friends, the appreciation with which her work, both in public and private, had been viewed. These Certificates bear a number of signatures, varying from sixty to one hundred and twenty.

Quarterly Meeting at Cane Creek, N. Carolina ...	13.	5.	1769.
Yearly Meeting at Blackwater, Virginia ...	15.	5.	1769.
Quarterly Meeting at Old Neck, N. Carolina ...	27.	5.	1769.
Yearly Meeting at Newport, Rhode Island ...	9.	6.	1769.
Quarterly Meeting at Westbury, Long Island ...	26.	8.	1769.
Yearly Meeting at Third Haven, Maryland ...	21.	10.	1769.
Monthly Meeting at Philadelphia	29.	12.	1769.
Quarterly Meeting at Purchase in New York Co.	3.	2.	1770.

The following is a copy of the Philadelphia Certificate :

From our Monthly Meeting at Philadelphia the 29th day of the twelfth month 1769.

To our Friends and Brethren at their Monthly and Quarterly Meetings at Kendal in Westmorland.

DEAR FRIENDS,

We salute you in the Love & Fellowship of the Gospel, and send this to Certify you, that our Worthy Friend Rachel Wilson, who lately embark'd on her return to you, hath with great Diligence & Labour, for the Promotion of Truth & Righteousness, by the continued Gracious extendings of Divine Help, been qualified & enabled to Preach the Doctrines of the Gospel, with evident Demonstration of the Influence and Energy of Heavenly Love : her Conversation & Conduct being Instructive and Exemplary, becoming a Minister of Christ ; Her Service hath been rendered acceptable and Serviceable to us, and great openness hath appear'd among those who do not make profession with us to receive the Doctrine she had to deliver.

We fervently desire, that as the Lord was pleas'd to send her forth and prepare the Way before her He may add a blessing to her Labours, and preserve her in Integrity and Zeal for His Honour, thro' every Dispensation which in Divine Wisdom may be allotted her, thro' her Course in Life.

Sign'd in and on behalf of our said Meeting by

YOUR LOVING FRIENDS.

Then follow 124 names, many probably those of well-known Friends of that day ; but a few

familiar to the writer through the journals, such as the following :

Jas., John, Israel, & Mary Pemberton. Anthony & Joyce Benezet. Samuel Morton, Joshua, Thomas, Samuel, Miers, & Grace Fisher. John, Sarah & Elizabeth Morris. Joshua & Mary Emlen.

The kindness of Rachel Wilson's American friends in the following lavish supply for her return voyage is evident (see explanatory note on stores for her outward voyage, page 49) :

STORES FOR R. WILLSON

1 Sheep
2 Piggs
1 doz. Ducks
2 do Fowls
1 Keg Tripe
Green Herbs &c
1 Cheese
100 Eggs
A Basket of Salt
Pickles, Olives &c.
1 dozn. Mountain
1 do Red Port
1 gallon Best Brandy
1 do Rum
1 do British Brandy
Potatoes
1 lb. Tea
½ lb. Coffee
1 lb. Chocolate
18 lbs. Loaf Sugar
12 lbs. Lisbon do
Spices of Several Sorts
7 lbs. Rice
2 lbs. Barley
2 lbs. Raisins, Almonds, &c.
½ lb. Cream of Tartar
6 doz. Porter
4 lbs. Currants
2 lbs. Raisins
3 lbs. French Plumbs
2 Qts. Vinigar
2 „ Olives

Account of Sundries sent per E. F. (? Eliza Fisher) on

board the Pennsylvania Packett, Nathaniel Falconer Mr., for R. Willson,

1 Jarr Almonds
1 Jarr French Plumbs
2 small Jars Preserved Domosens
1 do Rasberry Jelly
1 do Rasberry Jam
1 Jarr Olives
Sugar Candy, Liquorice, Stoughton's Bitters
2 Tongue Pieces Beef
Citron, Tobacco, Pipes, &c.
50 Oranges
6 Tongues
1 Pott Butter
1 Cag Onions
Potatoes, Cabbage, Turnips
Baum, Sage, Parsley, Hysop
1 Cag Cranberries
Porter &c.
Cyder
2 Cakes
1 Jarr Currant Jelly
6 Bottles Cherry Brandy, Lydia Gilpin
1 Jarr Pickles Oysters from Hannah Clifford
1 Bag dry[d]. Peaches from Michael Hutchinson
1 Ham Venison from Margt. Hains
2 doz. Cyder from I. Greanleaf
1 Jarr Tamarinds, Doc[r]. Moore
1 Jarr Mangoes, Doc[r]. Moore
1 Box Grapes from David Dishler
6 Bottles home-made Wine from Jno. Morris
6 Bottles Wine from Samuel Pleasant
8 Bottles of Samuel Hoare's Ale

Then follows a list of the various packages, which includes

1 Box with Saddle &c.
2 Trunks with Cloaths
1 long Box Curiositys

CHAPTER V

RACHEL WILSON'S LETTERS ON HER AMERICAN JOURNEY

The writer has received, through the kindness of Mr. H. A. Wilson, the letters which passed between Isaac and Rachel Wilson, during her nearly seventeen months' absence.

Rachel Wilson's letters, written from leaving home in July 1768 till the close of her American journey, number twenty-eight, and were all neatly folded and docketed by Isaac Wilson with date of writing and date of receipt. The letters were written at irregular intervals, as the dispatch seemed to depend upon whether she got news that there was a ship sailing " from these parts " in a day or two to Whitehaven, Liverpool, Bristol, etc. In view of the many extracts already given from her journals, it seems only necessary to give a few extracts of a personal nature from these letters. The ship she sailed in appears to have been owned by the Fishers of Philadelphia, so that with Samuel Fisher, as her kind and considerate companion, she was in good hands.

London, 2. 8. 1768.

After I wrote thee on 7th day I went to see my new lodgings, in company with R. Chester, J. Wagstaff and S. Fisher. The Captain looks to be a good natured, active little man; the cabin and State room rather elegant; and that if I had been never so generous, I suppose, could not have had more agreeable accommodation.

London, 12. 8. 1768.

Many Friends dined with me at my lodgings, also Captain Falkner, who I approve much of thus far. . . . A little while ago received thine of the 8th, which affected me a good deal, as it was like to be thy last on this side the great ocean.

On board the Pennsylvania Packett about 20 miles within the Capes, 15. 10. 1768.

My Dearest,

I want not inclination to transmit the earliest account I am capable, to one I know will be anxious to hear and probably may think the time long before it's received, of our safe arrival in the Bay of Delawar, after a passage of 7 weeks wanting one day, from leaving the land, till we got within the Capes, which was last night where we anchored. This morning we weighed anchor and are now sailing up the bay with little wind and the day pleasant; that I could not employ myself more agreeably than in penning this account to my Dear Husband and Children, who I doubt not, with their father, have often been solicitous to know how it hath fared with their mother upon the unstable element, upon which she hath dwelt so long. . . . I was much tried with sickness at times for upwards of 5 weeks, that had little relish for

food of any sort—Animal food became loathsome and tea had not its usual relish, yet water porridge became an acceptable dish ; I breakfasted and supped off them for near 2 weeks with great contentment and thankfulness upon my mind, being quite satisfied, having no desire for anything else, though we abounded with plenty of everything—rather elegant than otherwise : we had both roasted and boiled almost every day . . as well as variety of licquor, of both wines and malt. . . The Steward, a good natured obliging young man, with Wm. Colman's Black, who always seemed pleased if I would let them do me any little service. S. Fisher was ready upon every occasion to render me every service in his power—not being sick he was able to lend both I. Buck and myself a helping hand. His service was great, his affection, regard and tenderness was such that he never thought he did too much.

FAIRHILL *near* PHILADELPHIA. 5. 9. 1768.

Writing of excellent health, Rachel Wilson continues :

Which I cannot but highly esteem under my present engagements—having had Meetings every day, besides riding, which seems no hardship to the body, save a little hoarse sometimes after a Meeting, but nothing like what I've known heretofore. Meetings are much crowded with all sorts of people. . . . It's no pleasure to me to be followed from Meeting to Meeting. I rather want to have it otherwise, upon many accounts. I am not unacquainted with my own weakness, nor I hope ever shall. . . . I was enabled to attend 3 Meetings yesterday, all much crowded, in which the service fell to my lot. Wm. ——(?) opened in supplication, in the morning Meeting. No-one else the whole day but poor I. As an

instrument in the Hand of the Great Master, who is alone worthy of the praise, it was cause of admiration and humble thankfulness to my mind.

FAIRFAX, 27. 11. 1768.

Being favoured with health and good appetite, I want no fine sauce to relish my food. As to drink, Cyder agrees with me very well and it's pretty common in most places. . . As to Malt liquor I've seen none since I left Philadelphia, neither have I any desire after it. I've got an excellent horse, that carries me exceedingly easy—the American horses do exceed ours for ease, that am well suited.

CHARLESTOWN, 4. 2. 1769.

In this Wilderness Country it hath been my lot to visit the back inhabitants in many places, where no English Friend had ever been before under which have been supported far above my expectation, both in body and mind. We were always kindly received and entertained, in the best manner they were capable of and which I was thankful for, having never been exposed to lie in the woods. Yet our men companions were one night, but I got under cover, on a tolerable bed. My companions are in every respect agreeable. As to Samuel Morton, who gave up to come along with me from Philadelphia, he hath been of singular service to us. I have often had cause to believe he was of the Great Master's preparing, as also Sarah Jenny, who hath been exceeding serviceable to me and acceptable in Meeting and out of Meeting, her testimony sweet and lively, though not very long. We have travelled together in great unity, harmoniously labouring in the work of the Gospel. I've not wanted outward helpers, that everything hath been made as easy and comfortable

as I could expect; we have never wanted guides; but frequently several in company for 70, 80, and 100 miles through the woods. We have travelled upwards of 1300 miles. . . . I've not seen anything, since I came to America, I should like so well to bring home with me as my horse, if it should prove fit to carry me through. I never travelled on one so easy, which went with so much spirit—before his back was hurt 6 or 7 miles an hour he went with ease.

CHARLESTOWN, 8. 2. 1769

. . . Having a little time, though surrounded with company, it's more agreeable to converse with thee, though at this great distance, as my mind was never nearer united to my dear husband than now.

PINEWOOD *in* N. CAROLINA, 5. 3. 1769.

Their Quarterly Meeting began on 6th day (at Little River) which had a mind to attend. It held 3 days was long and satisfactory, being highly favoured with overshadowing of Divine Love, to the baptising our spirits together in near union. From this Quarterly Meeting we had Meetings appointed for the succeeding week, one every day—which have been enabled to attend. They have all been large; the notice being so full, we have not wanted numbers. People of all Denominations seem willing to come, when they hear of a stranger. In this part there are not many places of worship, but Friends Meeting Houses; here is a fine body of Friends, who look like themselves, which is pleasant to behold. We had a Meeting at Edentown, in the Court House, last 6th day, where no Friends lived, all the rest in Meeting houses. At this Meeting there were 2 priests and one dined with us after and behaved very civil. I came away easy and

thankful. . . . Here I met with a townsman and his wife, who seemed much pleased to see me. I knew her very well, she kept the "Half Moon."

Such meetings with old Kendalians are frequently mentioned and messages sent to their friends at home. There were also various meetings with Wilson cousins settled in America, and with Isaac's brother Anthony, who had fallen upon hard times there.

PHILADELPHIA, 17. 4. 1769.

I got safe to this place on 7th day night. My kind friends Samuel Fisher and Sister meeting me on 4th day, bringing along with them several acceptable letters from my dear friends whom I've left behind (The first she had received since leaving England) which contributed much to my satisfaction, to hear of all your health and welfare, in every respect, is exceeding pleasing and comfortable; a blessing highly to be prized and what calls for humble thankfulness at our hands. . . . I did expect to have been longer detained, before I reached this place, in visiting the western shore of Maryland, had not I met with stop in my own mind and another way pointed out, which I believe was in the wisdom of my Great Master, whom I ever desire carefully and steadily to eye, having nothing else in view but the honour of the cause in which I am engaged.

"PHILADELPHIA, 29. 4. 1769" she tells of visits to Darby, Chester, Wilmington, and Duck Creek Yearly Meeting, to which she drove in a carriage, accompanied by many Friends.

Being favoured from Meeting to Meeting and frequently in families much above my expectation, people of all persuasions flocking to Meetings, and we never want numbers to preach to. We have had several priests this week, yet no opposition, but a frank open acknowledgment of the truth. There seems more danger at present from their fawning than frowning. . . . I am in some hope, if health and strength be continued, I shall get the most of the meetings visited this summer, or if my Master set me at liberty, I shall be thankful once more to see my dear Husband and Children: yet I desire patiently to wait the appointed time.

PHILADELPHIA, 17. 5. 1769.

I've often been in deep admiration with the humbling view that, of a truth, "with God all things are possible," hard things have been made easy and bitter cups sweetened. . . . I've met with nothing to exalt or raise me in mine own opinion. I am too well acquainted with my own weakness and frailty to be set up with empty noise; it was never pleasant to be so popular, but hath often deeply humbled my mind and caused me to drop some tears.

NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND, 13. 6. 1769.

My voice continuing strong and my natural strength not failing, though the service lies close upon me; but He that hath called us into His Service is abundantly able to fit & qualify for every day's work. I am grown a little whiter, with being so much exposed to the wind & sun & with constant exercise of mind, that I suppose I look a good deal older, than when I left my own habitation, but that's a trifle, as I am so much favoured with health, not one day's sickness since I came upon the continent.

PHILADELPHIA, 22. 6. 1769.

. . . The last letter I rec'd from thee was dated 23rd 2mo. It seems a long time since, now when I am got where I had more reason to expect frequent inteligence. . . . Sarah Bonney is now by me, a Friend that travelled with Jane Crosfield, who desires to be remembered to her & Thos. Gawthorp, and many more enquire after them in these parts. The remembrance of them seems pleasant, they have left a sweet savour behind them, and some seals of their Ministry. My dear love to them both.

FALMOUTH, NEW ENGLAND, 16. 7. 1769.

We had a Meeting at Plymouth, in the Court House, to good satisfaction, no Friends living in that town, yet a precious opportunity it was. At Boston they behaved exceedingly well, that bears a great change, in the behaviour of the people towards Friends, instead of persecuting too much faning (*sic*) I sometimes fear. At a place called Cacacha we had four priests at Meeting, all which behaved well, one expressed his satisfaction pretty fully with the Meeting. Truth favouring, the mouths of gainsayers were stopped.

WEST CHESTER, 17. 8. 1769.

I am forced to steal a little time just for myself, from Friends, to converse with My Dear, who is more to me than anything here below, and can now inform thee that I've received thine of the 23rd 6, which conveys the agreable intelligence of your continued welfare & Dolly's safe delivery, news indeed very acceptable & what I desire to be truly thankful for. . . . My companion Sarah Hopkins is very agreeable, that we have gone on in great harmony. She often speaks of thee with a deal of

sympathy & takes good care of thy wife & her dear love to thee, though unknown. . . .

I had letters from Israel & John Pemberton. . . . I had John's company many weeks, which was very agreable & serviceable, both in & out of Meetings. He grows in his gift. I've had Israel's horse all this journey, which hath carried me exceedingly well, yet I do not refuse a ride in a carriage now & then.

PHILADELPHIA, 15. 9. 1769.

The engagement indeed hath been close exercise to both body & mind, but He that hath called into the service is abundantly sufficient to fit & qualify for every day's work, though my knees have been many times ready to smite one against another, under a sense of my own weakness, when I see such flockings to Meetings, with people of all denominations, and their expectation too much upon the instrument, it was affecting work, yet great hath been the condecention of Merciful Goodness, in favouring the workmanship of His hand, with a renewed visitation of His love. . . .

I know to whom I am writing, that this hint will be made no bad use of, indeed My Dear I've no boasting about me. My situation is still, and quite free from all murmering or repining at my lot. . . and thy frequent epistles contribute much to my satisfaction. . . . I am sorry daughter Rachel was discouraged from writing again ; her letter had its service to more than her mother, to whom it was truly acceptable ; her regard & tenderness for me was so feelingly expressed, the perusal afforded comfort to my mind & I've often looked it over. I with thee often peruse the old, till fresh ones come safe to my hand.

PHILADELPHIA, 27. 9. 1769.

I now expect about 5 weeks will set me at liberty . . . sometime in the 11th month I expect to embark upon the Pennsylvania Packet (Captain Falkner), in which I seem to have as much freedom to return as I had to come, which is cause of thankfulness, yet I hope your prayers will be put up on my account ; . . . It's now 12 o'clock & my engagements have been pretty close all day, that a little rest seems necessary, that I cannot add much at present, only to tell thee thine of 10th 7 mo., also son George's (George Braithwaite's) is received & perused with great satisfaction, they seemed as cordial drops to my drooping spirits.

This last letter is marked by Isaac Wilson.

Rec'd. the 22nd of 12 mo 7 days after my Dear's return home.

The letter referred to from George Braithwaite is with those of Isaac and Rachel and is dated Kendal, July 11, 1769.

DEAR MOTHER,

. . . I have often been prompted to write thee, by the recollection of many circumstances which brought thee to my remembrance, with the tender & endearing reflections of they maternal care, which have caused, & now cause afresh, my bosom to overflow with gratitude. We were happy in thy presence amongst us, & He that knows all things knows with what reluctance many of us gave thee up, but since that time to this day I have cause

to believe we have been blessed for thy sake. . . . Amongst the varied Blessings, wherewith the kind Hand of Providence hath been pleased to favour me, I count this one of the Greatest that, as it pleased Divine Wisdom to remove my dear Parents from this world of probation, I should be again favoured with a Father & Mother, whose affectionate regard inclines me to believe they have adopted me as their son.

The letter closes with an account of dear Debby and little Rachel (spoken of as "Etty") and some information as to his sister Sally's love affairs. "Debby and she is gone to stay a week at Lancaster."

In writing to Edward Stabler, Rachel Wilson says :

Continued good health & a quiet mind have enabled me to struggle through many things that otherwise would have appeared difficult, and almost unsurmountable. The Meetings in New England, Rhode Island, Long Island, New York & mostly since have been mostly large—sometimes obliged to hold them out of doors, which indeed hath been trying work both inwardly and outwardly; yet sufficient was the strength to the day, supported under every trial. I've no just cause to complain. There was great openness in the people to hear the truth declared, and many reached too—the love of God being plentifully shed abroad in our hearts.

In a letter to her friend, Eliza Fisher, dated Kendal, 25. 12. 1769, Rachel Wilson describes her return.

We landed at Deal early in the morning of the 10th instant, came to Canterbury Meeting where Friends seemed much rejoiced to see me, that night to Dartford & on 2nd day morning to London about 9, thus I got in good time to the morning Meeting which was owned with the Great Master's presence to our Mutual comfort and edification. . . . The Pennsylvania Packet got up that night, that I got my things on 3rd day, and left town that night—Richard Chester & wife, John Roberts & son accompanying Nancy & me to St. Albans, to be ready for the Kendal Coach on 4th day morning. We passed the evening very agreeably. The Coach called for us about 6 next morning. . . . Our coach companions proved agreeable. . . . We got safe to Lancaster about 2 on 7th day following, where my dear husband met us, in perfect health—only the joy upon the occasion had like to have been too much for him, which he soon recovered & we got safe to our own habitation about 7, where I found all my children & family well. . . . It was about 5 weeks & 2 days from my leaving Philadelphia to the reaching my own habitation—a shorter time than common. . . . My dear love in the nearest manner to every branch of your family Samuel Morton & wife, Brother John & his, Israel Pemberton & his united family, James, John & theirs, Sarah & D. Morris, John Morris & his, Anthony Morris & his, Thos. Cliford & his, Anthony Benezet and his, with Rebecca Jones & any other that may inquire.

Among the letters to Rachel Wilson which have been preserved are a great number of very affectionate ones, from those who travelled with her, or with whom she stayed, and many others asking her help. One of these is from a father whose only son is

bound to the sea (in his 18th year): "Seems to me as tho' he was thrown into the very mouth of destruction." The son was sailing under Captain Falconer, and having expressed a great regard for Rachel Wilson, she was implored to use her influence on board for his good. As an example of another class of letter an extract of one from Thomas Fisher, dated Philadelphia 6. 7. 1771 (two years after her return) may be quoted:

> Thou can scarcely conceive the Regard & Affection thy Friends & acquaintances on this side the water entertain for thee, the frequent inquiries after thee & solicitude expressed for thy welfare often occur & the remembrances of the eminent qualifications with which thou wast endowed, when on this side the water, teach us, who are far behind, to redouble our diligence in order to obtain the like eminent favours.

CHAPTER VI

ISAAC WILSON'S LETTERS TO HIS WIFE

Isaac Wilson's letters are all dated and numbered (20 in number), are interesting reading and show much of his mind and activities. The main part of them consists in assurances of his approval of, and unity in, the work which Rachel had undertaken, keen interest in each step of her way, and loving appreciation of all those whose kind companionship and care made things easier for her—Samuel Fisher for his tender care of her on the boat, others who gave up their time willingly to accompany her on her journeys, such as Samuel Morton, many who wrote to him promptly to cheer his heart, with good news of his wife's safe arrival, etc., etc. Whilst the sacrifice on Isaac's part was heavy he generally wrote cheerfully, but confessed to seasons of depression occasionally. The letters are all written from Kendal.

30. 11. 1768.

I was sunk the lowest, last first day, I have been since we parted, but how was I relieved & comforted when, at night, I received thy two letters, by way of Bristol, the

first wrote on board the Pennsylvania Packet, within the Capes, the 15th ult. giving a narrative of the voyage, which was very agreeable, & I rejoiced to find that the want of a female companion was in so good a degree made up, by the tender regard of thy fellow passengers, particularly that of Sam'l. Fisher, wch., as I expected, exceeded all, my very Dear Love to him, when thou sees him again, & forget not to inform him how greatly I am obliged & indebted to him, for his tender care over thee, in so needful a time, the sense whereof will not easily be erased from my remembrance.

The many favoured opportunities you had on board would doubtless be good putting on, during your confinement within so narrow limits, tending to season your minds & unite you one to another & to become a little family of Love.

26. 6. 1769. Isaac again repeats advice, given earlier, not to hurry or overdo herself.

It may not be amiss to revive to thy remembrance the wholesome advice of our friend John Griffith, heretofore mentioned, not to hurry too much, so as to endanger thy health thereby, or overrun thy service, for I am not the least fearful of the other extreme, as I doubt not, when Duty requires not thy stay, there will be a draught, strong enough to see us on this side the water, but that time seems yet at a distance, as I apprehend thou wilt for some time yet find thy mind bound to the Seed and Testimony in another land, which in due time the Great Master, who has called thee to this service, will release thee from the arduous engagement & vouchsafe his protecting arm, to bring thee safe to the tender connections here, in the fruition of Peace & I often think that we have great cause

to be humbly thankful, that our separation thus far has been rendered so tolerable, both thee and us favoured with the enjoyment of health, and all things made much easier than we would have expected, that there's no cause to murmur or repine. We have since the day in which we joined hands been highly favoured every way, even beyond what we looked for, and therefore we ought not to hold back anything wh. he the bountiful giver calls for at our hands, & may we My Dearest so step along the remaining part of our time, in his fear, as that we may witness the Smiles of his Countenance to be upon us, in our goings out & comings in, that through all his Great Name may be honoured, who is worthy for ever.

I salute thee in near affection & union & with a sympathising heart, subscribe myself Thine Isaac Wilson.

25. 8. 1768.

I observe in last night's paper this paragraph. "On Saturday last Mrs. Rachel Wilson, an eminent Preacher among the Quakers, embarked at Gravesend for America, but the wind not being fair, she preached by permission, in the Town's Hall, where a woman who behaved rudely, fell from a stool & broke her leg, after this, notwithstanding her insolent behaviour, the Friends collected Six or Seven Pounds for her recovery."

Isaac was doubtless proud of his wife and her powers, but, Quakerlike, such feelings were suppressed and even a kindly warning given to her.

23. 2. 1769.

Though thou may be followed from place to place, more than some have been, in the like Service, I hope

thy experience & humbling sense of the weakness & frailty of our nature, will preserve thee from being in danger of being in any degree lifted up hereby, ever bearing in remembrance this solemn truth that "the excellency of the Power is of God & not of Man. . . ."

I don't write this mistrusting thy care & watchfulness in this respect, though by some accounts received, thou may be as much tried, or more so, than heretofore, & a hint of this kind can do no harm. . . .

During the first few weeks of Rachel's absence Isaac was keeping a continued look-out on the winds, reminding himself, as he said, of the "Sailor's Wife."

Rachel's letters were very slow in arriving, generally about three months. In one of these she told of her serious horse accident, in the snow, and he found that, just at that time, he had had a presentiment of some misfortune happening to her.

29. 12. 1768. He writes :

I am desirous of another letter from thee, to be informed how thou art suited for a companion & a horse to carry thee. These are material things, to render a journey comfortable, to be sure a good state of health is a great thing, as this makes many difficulties easier surmounted. I have heard some tidings of thee from other hands besides thine, that thou seemed to have a good constitution, but that thou did not seem to spare it. . . . I cannot help being anxiously concerned on thy account & many pensive musing moments occur, though I keep these to myself & we go on as well as could expect, our children that are

grown up being very dutiful & ready to do all in their power, to make things as easy to me as possible & I think thy absence is rather of service to son John, at a time of life wh. to many is dangerous, by bringing on him a greater degree of care & thoughtfulness than might otherwise have been the case.

Many of Isaac's letters refer to his wife's return, but in all he is scrupulously careful not to express any desire or opinion as to the date, leaving the matter entirely to the guidance she will receive.

28. 9. 1769. Isaac writes, evidently expecting a prolonged stay :

When this (work) may according to thy best feelings be finished, I have no doubt but the endearing connexions here will have their attractive power, that I am persuaded not one word need be mentioned to expedite thy return, for wh. I am in no way impatient, but rest in hope that best Wisdom will be thy Guide, in all things, fervently desiring it may be so & that the all sufficient Arm may be thy support & protection, and with all the tender feelings & affection, due from a Husband to the best of Wives.

I conclude

Thine emphatically,

Isaac Wilson.

The chief events in the family referred to in the letters are :

First, the birth of " Debbie " Braithwaite's little girl Rachel (afterwards Mrs. Samuel Lloyd), of

whose good progress many letters speak. "Thy little namesake does finely," etc.

Second, the death of Anthony, Isaac and Rachel's second son, aged 18. He appears to have been an invalid. "Scarce a day's health for the last ten years," and his death really a happy release.

Third, the birth of "Dolly" Whitwell's little girl Hannah (afterwards Mrs. George Coates), with many accounts of her progress and of her older brother Isaac, "My namesake," attending school and almost knowing his letters, though he was only born 2. 12. 1765.

The details of the home family are disappointingly meagre, the following being as full as any :

23. 3. 1769.

Rachel makes a notable Housekeeper & keeps well in health. John also is very helpful & steady, as can be expected for his years, & we go on in business much as usual. Betty, Molly, Sally & Peggy are all well & behave like those of their years. The two last go now to the writing School, George Bewley having lately opened the School, wh. was so far lost that he had but three scholars the first week, but he has now near forty, having got an assistant . . . Our Ruth Seaman (a Friend, who was evidently a valued help in the house), and servants too, keep well in health.

26. 6. 1769.

Daughter Rachel keeps her health well & makes a steady housekeeper. John too is very well & steady in his conduct

& business, beyond most of his years. Betty & Molly are at Brother George's (High Wray) where they have been a few days. I have sent for them home to-day. Sally & Peggy keep well & go to school, they both grow pretty fast & behave like children.

It is refreshing to the writer to hear all these pet names for the children, as his experience, of two or three generations later, was that pet names were seldom used, and when anyone was afflicted with two names they had always to answer to them given in full. He concludes the *then* Quaker idea of a second name was that, unless used, it became a superfluity, like other superfluities, against which they protested. One would like to know the reason of the extraordinary lack of details of the family, as compared with what would be the case in these days, as, to have all the doings of the younger girls explained by the single sentence " are all well and behave like those of their years " seems disappointing and inadequate. The writer can only hazard the following as a possible explanation :

Rachel Wilson, like many early Friends, was tremendously imbued with the solemnity of her mission, and had laid aside all outward cares to throw her whole heart into it. That Isaac realized this is evident throughout his letters ; he was, moreover, a man of scrupulous honesty, and probably felt he could not begin to enter into details without telling some things which might disturb the saintly

mother's heart. The girls were not saints, and the hint that they "behaved as those of their years" gave Rachel a calmer time than if he had begun to describe their difficulties and scrapes, of which one can well believe Sally, at any rate, had her share.

Outside the immediate family there was a small number of relations of whom reports were sent regularly, such as the following :

26. 6. 1769.

Aunt Crewdson (Widow of John C. formerly of Crook, & sister of Rachel's Mother, Deborah W.), and her family are all well. Thomas (her son) is gone to York Quarterly Meeting. Sister Wakefield & her's are well. George & Debby (Braithwaite) were at Seaton last week. John Wakefield & his family are well. I hear pretty frequently from them at Settle, they are in usual health, Sister Debby [1] (Birkbeck) received an acceptable letter from thee. . . . I hear Sister Waithman recovers a better state of health, wh. is agreable in her large family. Brother George's (High Wray) were all well, when John went with Betty & Molly.

Outside these near relations there is mention of various cousins, not easy to identify, Cos. John

[1] Rachel Wilson's *sister* Debby, often mentioned in the letters of Isaac and Rachel, was the second wife of William Birkbeck, of Settle. The first wife was taken suddenly ill when away from home on a "concern," and it is about her that the beautiful and well authenticated story is told, of her appearance to her children at the time of her death and the peace with which she passed away, after saying that she could die happily, if only she could see her children once more. The full account is given in *The Birkbeck's of Westmorland*, and was reprinted in the Friends' Historical Society's paper.

Smith, Cos. Aireys, Cos. Abigail Dixon, " Cousin Bailiff's funeral at Hawkshead." Various family love affairs are mentioned.

30. 1. 1769.

Patience & Perseverance accomplish things. I have often told Cousin Debby (daughter of Sister Wakefield) she would not find it so easy a matter to shake off the affection betwixt her & cousin George Benson, as she thought of, & so it proves, she having now determined in his favour. I have been down there this evening & expect they will tell us their minds at our Preparative Meeting tomorrow. He is a steady valuable man &, if they are but favoured with health, I have no fear of their being happy in each other & can't help thinking their being so long held in suspense has been a disadvantage to them both, tho' they have been as well of late as for some years.

23. 2. 1769.

I told thee in my last of cousin George & Debby's intention. They both seem better & more cheerful, since they came to the conclusion to go forward & I hope when they get it over & are freed from many painful doubts & fears, it will contribute to the better health of them both, though George has been finely for some time. I believe they have fixed 2nd day come a week for the accomplishment of the affair. Debbie has acquitted herself, in the appearances she has made, exceedingly well & hope she will be enabled to do the same to the completion of the matter. It seems very pleasing to Sister, as she's like to marry her daughter agreeably, without having her taken away from her to a great distance.

23. 3. 1769.

Sister Birkbecks were both over at Debby's marriage, which was solemnised on 2nd day gone two weeks, when we had the largest company I ever saw on the like occasion, but they behaved remarkably well, there was no public Fds. invited on that ac^{t}. Anthony Mason happened to be here & stay'd till it was over. The Meeting was much favoured with the overshadowing of Good & preserved in a solemn frame, from first to last. I had a little to say in the opening of the Meeting, then Alice Rigge, after which the parties took each other & acquitted themselves as well as I ever observed any on the like occasion. Anthony (Mason) said a few words after very prettily (*sic*). We dined at the White Lion, the company was not large, scarcely 40. Sister endeavoured to contract, rather than extend, her invitation. It was much easier to have the entertainment where it was, than at Town End, & the whole was conducted with decency & to general satisfaction; but I doubt Debby has suffered last week, by dressing and undressing to receive her Bride Visits, as she's very poorly in a cold, but hope it may go off with care, but it's difficult getting her to take as much care as the delicacy of her constitution requires, which is a fault, and though she is of an amiable disposition, without any stiffness, yet bad to persuade to do, or forbear doing, things for her good; on this account I am most fearful of their not being as comfortable as they otherwise might be, for George is quite suited both to her & Sister's taste, and she will I doubt not, if they are favoured with health, be more happy with them, than alone.

That this peaceful arrangement was not long left undisturbed appears from the following:

10. 7. 1769.

Sister Wakefield, after spending several years in a state of widowhood, is like to be tried whether she'll marry again or not. William Dillworth & his daughter were over here a few weeks ago, & staid two nights at my house. He did not mention the affair to me, though he threw off a hint, which, if I had thought anything of the matter, might have served. . . .

But so it is he has made his intentions known to her, who should be of age to judge for herself & I believe I shall not meddle in the least degree, either to forward, or otherwise. . . . Yet after all this I cannot help calling to mind an observation of Cousin Betty Airey's, who is now here & finely, wh. she threw off some time ago, on a like occasion, that a fortified castle stood firm & strong till it came to be besieged, when it might be obliged to give out. . . . Nevertheless I hope Sister will weigh the matter prudently, before she gives way to it.

24. 8. 1769.

I was bantering Sister about her being brought upon her trial, as observed in my last; she's at age to think for herself what is for the best, I therefore shall not persuade or dissuade, in the least, but so agreeable is her present situation that I think she will not easily be prevailed on to change it.[1]

There does not appear to have been any *family* holiday, but frequent mentions of visits by the girls to relations at Settle, High Wray, and the Dillworths at Lancaster, etc.

[1] William Dillworth and Mary Wakefield were married at Preston Patrick, 10. 9. 1770.

The Stramongate house seems to have kept up a flow of hospitality, daughters from High Wray, Birkbecks from Settle, Molly Dillworth, "a few weeks," Cousin Betty Holme (daughter of Isaac's Sister Elizabeth) "for some time," and many visits from Friends are noted—such as the following :

We had great strangers at our Quarterly Meeting, viz. John Gurney of Norwich, his wife, three daughters & a daughter of his brother Henry's. They were at York, & so came forward hither. They lodged at the King's Arms, but dined with us one day & with sister Wakefield another. They appeared very prettily, as if they were not ashamed of discovering to what regiment they belonged. We were pleased with their company, as I believe they were with coming to see us. They desired me to give their kind love to thee when I wrote. I let them hear two of thy last letters, wh. was very agreeable to them, and there seemed a good deal of tenderness & sympathy about them & the girls appear very prettily, not in the Guga order, like some in inferior circumstances in the North.

Another visit noted is that of Samuel Fothergill and three Friends to breakfast, followed by a "Seasonable Opportunity."

28. 9. 1769.

Robert Lawson's son John is now married to John Arthington's daughter Betsy. I wish he may prove as good a husband as I think she deserves. They step't over here last week with her mother, but made very short stay.

Mary Arthington is a valuable woman, but her husband appears to be bending the whole faculties of his mind to business, in order to accumulate more wealth.

This story reminds the writer of one often told him by his mother of a certain Robert Arthington who asked Joseph Jowitt's permission to propose to his daughter. Joseph Jowitt, recognizing probably the family characteristic, made it a condition that he should keep a carriage for his daughter. The marriage took place and the condition was observed, to the letter, but never a horse was kept, and when the Wilson children were staying with their Jowitt relatives and visited the Arthingtons, one of their entertainments was to play in the horseless carriage.

This tendency probably also accounts for the large fortune left in a later generation.

Isaac Wilson's letters naturally referred constantly to the affairs of the Meeting, how his wife's Ministry was missed, especially as so many others were away on concerns in different parts, Jane Crosfield, Thos. Gawthorp, Alice Rigge, etc., so that there was a shortness of Ministry, though he often took a small part.

28. 4. 1769.

Thos. Crewdson is set off his journey, intending to be at the Yearly Meeting. Thos. Gawthorp, I hear, intends to draw thither also. . I think I may plead excuse

this year, as I apprehend I have been there twenty times in 25 years.

What must this have meant in time, travelling 500 miles, presumably generally on horseback, on each occasion !

In 1769 an event of considerable importance to local Friends took place, in the holding of the " Northern Yearly Meeting " at Kirkby Lonsdale.

28. 4. 1769.

Our Northern Yearly Meeting at Kirkby Lonsdale is now over & I hope to pretty general satisfaction. The Shed made for that purpose was not the largest, but the most comfortable of the kind I have seen ; it was well filled at all the three Public Meetings, but not many more than it would contain. The people behaved well & so far as one could perceive were well satisfied. A pretty deal of the Publick Service fell on Sam'l. Fothergill. Hannah Harris & Sarah Taylor were there & both had a time. Thos. Greer was there, though not much concerned in public service. We had more Testimonies at the Meetg. for Conference, than all the Public Meetings ; it was a favoured opportunity, as was the select Meeting. There was a much greater number of Friends than I expected, the town was pretty well filled, the innkeepers did better in that respect than I expected. Son John & daughter Rachel were there two days & returned at nights. Debby, Betty & Molly were there one day. Sisters from Settle were there with Brother & three of their young men. Sister Wakefield was there two days & Debby. . . .

Isaac's letters bear witness to his work as a conciliator.

6. 8. 1768.

Cousin John Smith with his son[1] & daughter came here last night. He proposes leaving his daughter here & taking his son to Settle, to see if he can leave him there for a while, for his improvement. . . . I have had an opportunity of talking the matter of difference over, betwixt him & Daniel Woodland & find him, as I expected, very stiff in the affair, however I may perhaps have the opportunity of doing a little more, in order to soften him before he goes.

The subject is continued in the next letter.

8. 8. 1768.

Cousin Smith stays over our general Meeting tomorrow & so goes to Brigflatts in the evening & proposes to leave his daughter there, to stay a few days, & so return hither, he & his son to proceed to Settle & he thinks of leaving him there & to return home direct from thence. I have prevailed upon him to suffer me to write on his behalf, to Danl. Woodland, making him an offer of referring all matters of dispute betwixt them to four Friends, to be deputed by, and out of, the next Quarterly Meeting at York, but he would not write himself at any rate, but I hope Danl. will comply with the offer made, as there can be no design of anything unfair by the plan proposed.

28. 10. 1768.

I am pleased with getting quit of a very troublesome affair I was embarked in before thou left home. I mean

[1] The writer wonders whether there is anything to connect the Smith son with the Joseph Smith who married I. and R.'s daughter Rachel many years later. He is given in the Pedigree as "Son of John & Elizabeth Smith."

the reference between W. Chigrin, Jos[a]. Gee & Peter Nicholson. I had been at Whitehaven, before thou left us, since wh. we were two days at Ulverston & two here with the parties, & I have since met Abram Rawlinson twice at Burton & yesterday we published our award, which I hope will be final, though perhaps not pleasing to either party. This affair was not entered into of choice, nor should I like such another, for I believe the number of papers I have by me, containing matter of evidence, is not less than ten quires of paper.

But I hope we have satisfied our own consciences fully, being now & I hope shall remain, easy with what we have done.

Isaac does not write much about his business doings to his wife, through the feeling that such matters were too mundane, in her present occupation.

4. 8. 1768.

Son John & I went to Brother George's (High Wray) on 1st day evening, where we found them all well & reached Broughton (Fair) in good time, though it was a wet morning. . . . We got about 6 Packs, not ill bought, but I should not trouble thee with these mundane things, when I hope thy mind is engaged in matters of a higher nature.

In another letter he mentions attending Settle Fair, where he met Brother Barnard.

10. 7. 1769.

I purpose to set off on my journey into Yorkshire, in a few days, it being about the time, so shall not write again

till after my return. I should be glad to have our Hay out of the way first, as we are now in hand with it & the weather not very favourable at present. We had some very hot weather end of last week, wh. set many to work, besides myself. . . .

I have not hitherto troubled thee with any thing relative to our secular affairs, wh. are necessary for us, who are left to stay by the stuff, to pay a little attention to, in its Season ; considering thy engagements for some time past have been of a higher nature. . . . Nevertheless it may not be amiss to say that we go on in business pretty stilly & much as usual. We had a pretty large stock of goods in the Spring, as we have some time heretofore had, but they are all cleared, & we have now orders as much as we can well turn us to, notwithstanding the uneasiness which has arisen in North America, on account of our Parliament taxing them, and from accounts from various quarters one might have expected it would have been otherwise. I am rather fearful that our Parliament have not sufficiently matured the affair, nor entered so fully into it as a matter of such consequence requires & there's so much disquietude, amongst our great people at the helm, & those who have been in place & now are not, as is very unpleasant to hear or perceive. But notwithstanding we as a people (Quakers), or some amongst us, may think they see something out of joint, which at present does not require vast penetration to be sensible of, painfully so ; yet I cannot by any means think our People the proper instruments for setting things right, which may appear out of order ; as we were the other day but a poor handful, despised & persecuted for our religious dissent, and glad our forefathers were, by all their labour & solicitude, to obtain the liberty we have of late enjoyed. I hope therefore

that the members of our Society will be very cautious how they intermeddle in politics or government.

In another letter Rachel is assured that all her drafts on the London Bankers, Smith, Wright, and Grey, will be honoured (the firm of which their son in law, Joseph Smith was later a partner). The kindness of American Friends was such that this provision proved almost unnecessary.

CHAPTER VII

RACHEL WILSON'S LATER YEARS

From the Journal of John Woolman.

30. 8. 1772.

This morning I wrote a letter in substance as follows (to Rachel Wilson of Kendal, then absent on a preaching tour):

Beloved Friend,

. . . . . .

Then follows a recognition of God's love, in the improved conditions for Friends, which enable them to preach the Gospel, without hindrance and the responsibility thus laid upon them.

The letter continues:

Last evening I had a little opportunity at thy house, with some of thy family, in thy absence, in which I rejoiced, and feeling a sweetness in my mind towards thee, I now endeavour to open a little of the feeling I had there.

I have heard that you in these parts have, at certain Seasons, Meetings of Conference, in relation to Friends

living up to our principles, in which several Meetings unite in one, with which I feel unity, I having in some measure felt Truth lead that way, amongst Friends in America; and have found, my dear friend, that in these labours all Superfluities in our own living are against us. I feel that pure love toward thee, in which there is freedom. I look at that precious gift bestowed on thee, with Awfulness, before him who gave it, and feel a care that we may be so separated to the gospel of Christ, that those who proceed from the Spirit of this world may have no place amongst us.

thy frd.

John Woolman.

It seems impossible to the writer, to read the Journals and Letters of John Woolman, without getting a strange affection for, and sympathy with, this selfless man.

It is recorded that on Rachel Wilson's American visit, on one memorable occasion, she had risen to speak, when she suddenly felt the drift of her thoughts changed, and she addressed her remarks to John Woolman, who was just going away on one of his many "concerns." How interesting it would be if we could look in upon the later meeting of Woolman and Rachel Wilson's family.

We can imagine him leaving Low Park, the farm of George and Jane Crosfield, by the (now grassy) lane coming out on to the main road to Kirkby Lonsdale, opposite Summerlands, with the little

Quaker burial ground [1] at the side of it and walking forward to Kendal, his custom being to walk whenever possible. Here, we can picture the strange figure in his grey undyed Quaker clothes and his undyed broad-brimmed hat, welcomed by the dyer's family as an honoured guest, and soon seated with them at their meal, Isaac at the head of the table, the eldest home daughter Rachel at the foot, son John and the four younger sisters making up a goodly show of sweet, sober, intelligent young Friends, in their simple dress. We can imagine Woolman feeling at home in such surroundings, not having his thoughts disturbed by any lavish display, as they were frequently by such a thing as a show of silver goblets, in richer Friends' houses. We can see, in our mind's eye, the calm scene in the "little opportunity" referred to in his letter, when, sitting round the table, the saintly ascetic delivered his message of self-renunciation, avoidance of superfluities, and a calm dwelling in the presence of their Lord.

Before he left we can understand the interest with which, having worked as a tailor, he paid a visit to the warehouse and examined the goods which the Wilsons, father and son, were turning out, and then felt, when he got away, that he had not been

[1] This ground contains only one memorial stone, to Annie Cartmell, of Warthsudden, Preston Patrick, probably of the same family as John Wilson's wife, Isaac's sister-in-law.

quite faithful to his Master, in failing to enter his loving protest—hence his later letter to the son John, whom he may have considered more responsible for the modern innovations than his father, and for whom he had contracted a special affection, possibly noting in him more of his mother's character than of the shrewd common sense of his father.

From Rachel Wilson's return in 1769, there is no record of special interest to chronicle until 1774, when a sad break came in the family, through the early death of the eldest daughter, Dorothy Whitwell, at 32, leaving four small children, the youngest a new-born babe, Rachel (afterwards wife of Edward Pease).

In 1774 we find the first indication of Rachel Wilson's health failing. She writes to friends in that year, telling of a long illness, which had kept her a prisoner in the house for about four months, and when she thought riding might be possible, she writes of having had to return after about a mile, the pain in her side having become so severe. She recovered from this illness and was able to resume many of her activities, but her life, as will be seen from the following letters, closed a few months later when on a visit to London, staying with her old friends, the Chesters, at Stoke Newington.

The writer's apology for inserting this letter, with its intimate family details, is that it is the only letter of the kind which has come into his hands.

Letter written by John Wilson to his Father, Isaac Wilson.

KENDAL, 10. 3. 1775.

DEAR FATHER,

Thy acceptable Favours of the 2nd and 4th Inst. came duly to hand, which were truly pleasing to us, as they contained a more favourable account of our Dear Mother and of thy welfare, and tho' we, with you, may be thinking at times of your returning Home, yet I can't help being desirous that it may not be attempted too soon, if she should continue to improve and gather strength, though it will be agreeable to you to be at Home, yet the danger of being stopped on the Road (which would be very painful), would not have out of sight, but doubt not your care in this respect. (? Illness or highwaymen referred to).

Brother and Sister Braithwaite were pleased with Doctor's directions about little Alice, who continues as when I wrote last; they had agreed not to make her uneasy by anything being done to her, before I received thine, and as to her being restricted to milk and vegetable diet, it will be no hardship, as she has taken no animal food for some time, nor anything spirituous, except now and then half a glass of wine, and as to the Rochelle Salt Dr. Ainsley had ordered before, which she has taken in powders a little every day or every other. Brother and Sister are both finely, considering their fatigue and anxiety.

Uncle and Aunt Dillworth came to Kendal on 3rd Day, they are both tolerably, only he is not quite so good at walking as sometimes. I was with them a little piece last night, and they desired their dear love to you and Friend Chesters.

Our family are all favoured with usual (health). Little

Etty Whitwell is got finely again. I am, with dear love to self, Mother and kind landlord and his, in which Sisters join,

Thy affectionate and dutiful Son,

JOHN WILSON.

Three letters have been preserved written by Isaac Wilson to his children at home, with reports of their mother's state. On 21. 2. 1775.

The Doctor says what little alteration there is, is in her favour, a considerable degree of the fever continues, her head is happily preserved quite clear . . . talking is difficult. The principal pain she complains of is in her right side.

On 14. 3. 1775. Isaac acknowledges his son's letter, and continues :

I was in hopes in the three days wh. have passed since I wrote you last, that I might have given you a more favourable acct. of your Dear Mother, but that is not the case ; her disorder continuing too obstinate to give way to the efforts of nature, assisted by medicine & her strength of consequence failing, my hopes therefore of her recovery vanish. . . .

On 18. 3. 1775 :

The two last letters I wrote would make you apprehensive of and look for the account I have now to transmit viz. the affecting intelligence of your Dear Mother being removed from us about one o'clock this morning. For about 24 hours of the time, after I wrote last, she was

very light headed, almost without intermission. This was a distressing dispensation to me & tended to fill my mind with thankfulness when I perceived her drawing away & becoming still, which happened about three hours before she drew her last, which she did very quietly. It was a great satisfaction to myself, Richard & Patience Chester with Sally Forster, who were all present during that period. P. Chester has held out wonderfully to the last & her service, under this trying dispensation, not easy to be described. . . . We have decided to have the funeral on fifth day next. . . . And now dear children let us labour to moderate our grief for the loss of her who was near & dear to us & is now removed from works to rewards.

Through the kindness of Miss A. L. Somervell the following has come into the writer's hands, copied in an old book, "An Epitaph on Rachel Wilson," by Mary Barnard. From this the following is extracted :

Reader, If thou art blessed with affluence, if Providence has multiplied thy possessions, let her willingness to share the calamities of others, and her liberal endeavours to remove the burden of indigence, animate to diligence in thy extensive stewardship ; for her social conduct was ever actuated by a diffusive spirit of benevolence, and her house was munificently hospitable. If thou art united in the nearest alliance, if thy importance is rendered still greater by a rising offspring, few surpassed her in maternal tenderness, fulfilling every domestic duty with uncommon alacrity.

An account of Rachel Wilson's religious life

is given in *Piety Promoted*, which consists of a short résumé of the life and work and last testimonies of leading Friends in the Society. After dwelling on her early life and the success of her Ministry, the account continues :

She was a loving wife, an affectionate parent, a kind & helpful neighbour, tenderly sympathising with the afflicted, and frequent in visiting the sick, in which visits she was very serviceable ; often administering comfort to the drooping, distressed mind.

In the course of her religious duty she came to London about the first month 1775. . . .

She entered into her service with great humility, visited most of the Meetings in the city, and finding her mind concerned for the inhabitants of Gravesend, (having had two Meetings with them when she embarked for America), she went again to visit them. She was gladly received, and held two Meetings in the Town Hall, where through divine favour, she was helped through her Service, to her own peace, and the comfort of many present.

After her return she attended several week-day Meetings, in the last of which, at Devonshire House, she was clothed with divine love, in an encouraging testimony to the honest hearted.

The next day, being the 4th of second month she was taken ill & was confined wholly to her chamber, and mostly to her bed, for six weeks ; during which time she was favoured with quietness of mind ; expressed her resignation either to live or die ; and requested her husband, who attended upon her a great part of the time, that he would tell their children, that it was her great desire they might, above every consideration, mind the one thing needful,

which having been her care, was her unspeakable consolation. . . .

The last words she was heard to say were "Good tidings." She quietly departed this life on the 18th of the third month 1775, at the house of Richard Chester, London; and her remains were interred on the 23rd of the same, in Bunhill Fields, after a Meeting held at Devonshire House.

CHAPTER VIII

ISAAC WILSON'S LATER YEARS

At the time of Rachel Wilson's death in 1775, the home family consisted of the following : Rachel, 28 ; John, 26 ; Elizabeth, 21 ; Mary, 19 ; Sarah, 15 ; and Margaret, 14 ; and doubtless Isaac's trusted son and fine competent daughters did all in their power to make up to him for the loss of their mother, during the remaining ten years of his life.

That Isaac Wilson took a keen interest in Friends' concerns is well known, and his name appears frequently in Friends' Records, such as the following :

On the 8. mo. 30. 1761, Darlington. Monthly meeting held here by appointment, to accommodate the following Friends who were visitors, pursuant to the direction of the Yearly Meeting. . . . Is. Wilson, Wm. Dillworth, Thos. Corbyn, etc., by whom several judicious remarks were made, and solid advice given. Meeting held from 11 to near 6 o'clock.

In 1774 Isaac Wilson of Kendal with S. Fothergill visited all the meetings of Friends in Scotland, with a view to restore discipline which had become very lax. In Samuel Fothergill's letters he speaks highly of the help

given by Isaac Wilson in this work, which was a matter of deep concern to Friends at this time.

Of Isaac's Ministry we know little, but as Clerk to Quarterly Meeting for many years he held a position of influence among Friends. Deborah Birkbeck, in writing to Rachel Wilson when in America, says :

I thought when I was at Deborah Wakefield's marriage I would, if remembered when I wrote thee, tell thee how wonderful Brother (I. W.) was. I thought him greatly favoured in the Meeting ; he soon stood up & with Power & Authority was instrumental to still the people.

In 1772, the new Friends' Schoolhouse in Stramongate was built, and no doubt so practical a business man as Isaac Wilson took a keen interest in the building and project generally. The following is extracted from *Kirkbie Kendall* :

The first School was founded in 1698, the master's salary being £16. In 1706 an assistant was engaged at £10, the school premises adjoining the (old) Meeting House on the south side. About 1715, Thos. Rebanks took over the headship, and in 1728 a boarding school was established. Thos. Rebanks held the position for about 50 years. In 1772 the school was reorganized, and George Bewley, "a man of superior mind and a good classic," was appointed headmaster. The Kendal Friends had built a "capacious house in a retired and healthful part of the town divided into four commodious apartments, which, though perfectly distinct, will yet, by help of glass in the partitions, be under

the view of one person, the expense whereof when completed will be about £500." The bulk had been subscribed locally, but an appeal to Friends at a distance was issued. The Prospectus read as follows :

At Kendal in Westmorland.

Was lately opened, under the direction and management of George Bewley, Geo., and Leonard Raw.

A new large and commodious School, in an open, healthful and retired situation, where youth are instructed

	£	s.	d.	
In English and Writing at ...	1	10	0	By the year and five shillings upon admission.
In Arithmetic, Latin & French at	2	2	0	
In Greek & the practical parts of the Mathematics at ...	3	3	0	
And in the Theoretic or Elementary parts thereof at ...	4	4	0	

Boarders are received into the Master's House at £14 per Annum (Washing and Tea excluded).

Geo. Bewley retired in 1785, and was succeeded by his cousins, Jonathan and John Dalton, and the School remains famous for their connection with it.

Their circular issued in 1787 mentions "the several parts of pure and mixed mathematics, specified beneath."

Geometry.	Gauging.	Optics.
Trigonometry.	Algebra.	Perspective.
Navigation.	Fluxions.	Mechanics.
Geography.	Conic Fluxions.	Pneumatics.
Use of the Globe.	Astronomy.	Hydrostatics.
Mensuration.	Projection.	Hydraulics, &c.
Surveying.	Dialing.	

John Dalton left the school for the Philosophical Institution in Manchester in 1793, and Jonathan in 1815, when he was followed by Samuel Marshall.

In this connection the following letters are of interest :

Letter, undated, to George Bewley, who was Head Master of the Friends' School. This appears to be in reply to a letter to " dearly esteemed Friends, I. and R. Wilson," dated 28. 9. 1772, from G. B., expressing, in very " proper " language, his note of the " person, behaviour, and disposition, of your daughter Betty."

Dr. Friend,

I received thy few lines the other day by Wm. Reynolds in answer to which I can only say, as I did to a young man from Worcester who paid my daughter Rachel several visits, with my wife's and my consents, which were fruitless, that we had done as much as was consistent for us to do in the affair, in giving our consents to his procedure, and on all occasions when the matter became the subject of our conversation before our daughter, acted consonant therewith ; but to endeavour to influence her beyond her own inclinations, was what we did not think prudent or safe to do, for if they marry I would have them by all means marry their affections ; but so it frequently happens that some are brought to Love and hardly know why, and others forbear to Love without knowing the cause. So if thou art apprehensive that the needful endeavours are used, rest satisfied on that account. I have nothing more to add than that I would not have this to prevent Thee from the freedom of stepping into our

House to spend a little time as often as opportunity offers, which will be particularly pleasing to my wife and to Thy affectionate Friend.

Isaac Wilson.

The following unexpectedly frank letter, written by Isaac Wilson, is of interest in this connection, and shows his championship of the wife ultimately chosen by George Bewley :

Kendal, 20*th.* 7*th. M. of* 1776.

Respect'd Kins'n.

Will'm Chapman,

Thine of the 7th Inst. is now before me, with a Copy of Geo. Bewley's Letter to thee respect'g thy two sons under his care, which have carefully perused and duly considered, & must own I don't see that his s'd Letter breaths more of the Spirits of a Tyrant, than a Christian School-master, nor do I think any thing in it inconsistent w'th the latter Character, which he has for several years past sustained to general satisfaction, both amongst our Friends & others, without any thing of the other kind appearing in any part of his Conduct.

His wife is known to be of a tender, humane disposition & very kind to the Boys under her care, if they behave with decency, but when she was attacked in the manner she was, by the Parent of the Little Boy who was so abused by Robt, it was like to rouse the most meek, & notwithstanding a Whip in the hands of a Woman, tho an Instrument commonly used to a Horse or a Dog, may seem out of the way, yet being applied to the shoulder or Back of a Man or a Boy with their Cloths on, would have no bad effect, nor do I believe the Boy was the least worse

for it, nor that he smarted so much as a Common Whipping w'th a birch rod would have occasioned; Nevertheless I own it would have been more agreeable if she had let the Weapon alone & referred the Correction to her Husband, more from the look or name of the thing, than any harm occasioned thereby, as I believe there was none. . . . . .; for I am sorry to have occasion to say that they have not only in Geo. Bewley's House & School behaved in an audatious unbecoming Manner, but at sundry places where they have visited, not my House, in such a rude way that it grieved me to hear of it, at w'ch places I am apt to think they will not be desirous of seeing them again, till they have learn't to behave differently.

What I have said may perhaps be more than can be well received tho I have no doubt but on examination it will be found true, & I am sorry for't. As Geo. Bewley's repeated admonission & reasoning w'th them on Acct of their misconduct has not had the desired effect, I am fearful Correction will also fail, when they are strengthened as above against reproof, tho perhaps without design, I am therefore clear in my Judgments that it will be most conducive to the peace of George's Family & reputation of the School to have them taken home, w'ch he is desirous of.

To have been able to transmit Thee a different Acct. would have been much more agreeable to Thy respectful Kin'n,

ISAAC WILSON.

The following letters written by Isaac Wilson, when a widower, show his care for another daughter's

happiness, but as the marriage ultimately took place on December 21, 1781, business appears to have taken second place for the time.

KENDAL, 11*th.* 10*th M. of* 1781.

DEAR FRIEND

THOS. CORBYN,

The time appointed now draws near for the Frds. in the Country to meet those of the Meeting for Sufferings, on an affair of no small importance. I have looked at it for some time, but the situation of my health is such that I don't think it prudent to undertake such a journey at this season and to have to return in the very depth of Winter, neither can I suppose that my attendance is of much consequence, or could be of much, if any, service in that Business, but I much wish that Frds. who travel therein may be clothed with best wisdom in their deliberations on this matter & where different Sentiments in respect to some particular things may appear, mutual condesention may at the same time abound.

My Daughter Mary I find hath recd. a Letter from Geo. Stacey by last Post, wch. brings the unpleasing Acct. of your John Beamont being taken ill at Worcester & that his complaint is of such a nature that the Physician who attends him does not expect he will be relieved therefrom for some considerable time, & that Geo. Stacey was proposd to step into his Journey & finish what remains thereof, wch. may take him 6 or 7 weeks to accomplish ; so that his intended Marriage wth. my Daughter must on that Acct. be postponed, how long is uncertain, as I presume when this Journey is finished another will shortly succeed wch. it's more than probable J. Beamont may not be in a situation to engage in, as it will be a winter's

Journey, not likely for a person coming out of a tedious Illness to be able to bear.

My Daughter has been very thought (*sic*) about this important affair for several months past, to the evident injury of her Health, & our Preparative & Monthly Meetings being adjourn'd to accomodate them, in order to render George's stay here the shorter, if the matter is now put by or postponed on the above Acct. it is easy to conceive that her Mind instead of being relieved must be more depressed thereby, wch. is a matter deserving a thought, as well as the performance of the remains of J. Beamont's Journey, to do wch. I should think a substitute might be procured, if it is of such consequence that it cannot be omitted, or postponed at any rate.

This cannot do other than give Geo. Stacey with me & my Family considerable concern, that such a jumble should happen, respecting a matter of the most importance of all temporal concerns to the Parties engaging therein.

I am wth. the tender of Dr. Love to Self & Family

Thy Affectionate Frd.

I. W.

KENDAL, *3rd 11th M. of* 1781.

DEAR FRIEND,

T. CORBYN,

Both Thy Favours came to hand in due course, & in reply to the last, our next Preparative Meet'g. falls in course on the 4th and the Monthly Meet'g. on the 7th of next month ; & have further only to observe that tho it might be desirable to my Self & Family to have the important engagement quietly accomplished, consistent with the Plan laid down, yet as all the discouragement that a diffident fearful mind could feel, from it's being

wholly disconcerted, & the unpleasing refection of the fruitless adjournments of our Meetings is now pretty much got over, tho not without, more concern of Mind than some may imagine, who have not viewed the matter in the same light as we have done ; so far as I know my Daughter wth. my Self & Family don't want that your House should be put to any inconvenience on Acct. of the accomplishmt. of this affair, but that it will be perfectly agreeable to us, if it is so to Geo. Stacey, to have the matter postponed a few months longer, in case that will less interfere with Business & in all respects suit better.

I hope by this time the Business of digesting the Book of Extracts will be finished to the satisfaction of the Friends who have laboured therein.

My Children joining me in the tenders of Dr. Love to Self & Family.

I am Thy Affectionate Friend,
I. W.

Letter from Isaac Wilson to Josiah Messer, 7. 6. 1785 (original in the Friends' Central Library, London).

After stating that he had already sent a letter to George Stacey on the subject of the communication received, the letter continues :

I have considered the matter of the prospect before thee, being in a capacity of supporting a family may be attended with some uncertainty. I consider that all mundane things are uncertain ; we ought not to depend too much on things which may be seen, but rather on that blessing which makes truly rich, added to our honest endeavours. I feel easy to leave thee at liberty to address my daughter

Betsy in point of marriage, and am, with the tenders of dear love,

Thy affectionate Friend,
Isaac Wilson.

P.S. My dear love attends dear Daughter Stacey and her little ones, whom we shall be pleased to see soon as it may suit, and I expect dear Rachel will write.

This letter reads as though the writer were familiar with the story of his father and George Benson; possibly his own worldly prospects had not been of the brightest when he made his proposal.

Some years earlier than the attachments referred to in the last letters, on 8. 9. 1779, the only surviving son, John, was married at the Meeting House at Yealand to Sarah, youngest daughter of William and Esther Dillworth, of Lancaster. In 1770, William Dillworth, who was a banker at Lancaster, had married for his second wife, Rachel Wilson's sister, Mary (widow of Roger Wakefield, who had died in 1756). From the time of the second marriage it is probable that there was a close intimacy between the families, resulting in the marriage of Rachel's son and Mary's stepdaughter. An older daughter, Cicely, had married Thomas Crewdson, of Kendal, in 1774, another daughter, John Birkbeck, of Settle, earlier in 1779. John Birkbeck was the son of the John Birkbeck who had married the sister of Rachel Wilson and Mary Wakefield, so that two of Mary Dillworth's stepdaughters married her nephews,

and Cicely her cousin. Doubtless his son's marriage was strongly approved by Isaac Wilson, with its prospect of carrying down the family name.

From about 1772 onwards, Isaac Wilson formed the habit of writing a rough copy, often with many corrections, of letters of special importance ; the rough copies being left in an old portfolio, which has been at Castle Mills, Kendal, from that time, and was kindly lent to the writer by Mr. Theodore Wilson. Many of these letters are interesting, as throwing a light upon the character and interests of the writer, and from such the following extracts are culled :

17/10/1772.

Letter to Mildred and Roberts, (London Ship Owners & Merchants) by whom he had been entrusted, when last in Town, to try to find them a young man, suitable to take a responsible post in their business. The letter recommends a young Friend, 20 miles away, 26 years of age, "steady and well esteemed among Friends" with a little business in the Flax Trade. "He writes a middling good hand, something like mine."

The letter continues: "Our Friends Sarah and Deb. Morris from Philadelphia were at our Qr. Meeting last week, and my Spouse is gone down with them to Lancaster to attend their's ; we expect them back tonight and I purpose accompanying them into Cumberland tomorrow or next day. Sarah bears the fatigue of travel and other exercise as well as one can expect for her years. She is indeed a valuable woman. Hannah Harris proposes attend-

ing them pretty much through their county, and my wife has thoughts too of doing the same, through the county of Durham, after which they purpose bending their course Southward as the winter will be approaching. . . .

John Woolman is now 'laying' at York in the small-pox, as I presume you will have heard, but the accounts we have heard since he was seized with the disorder are not unfavourable, though uncertain how it may turn with him, for they are a sore disorder and much stirring here away and many die of them who take 'em in the natural way, but that of Inoculation gains ground, having been performed on some hundreds with great success.

I am, with the tenders of dear Love to you and all yours,

Your affectionate Friend,

ISAAC WILSON."

16/6/1773.

Letter to an orphan nephew who had evidently got into fast ways and wanted to break his indenture, on which his Master had consulted Isaac Wilson. Isaac Wilson's letter strongly warns the youth of the serious stain on his character, which a break in indenture would involve. The letter continues: "I am doubtful thou hast formed some schemes in thy head and art in a hurry to prosecute the same before they are half digested, and art ready to flatter thyself that a different situation in life would be much more eligible than the present, without sufficiently weighing the difficulty, risk and danger which may attend such a change. . . ." "So my dear Lad, I cannot but recommend thee to lay aside all these things and shut out all such thoughts as have tended to make thee weary of thy servitude and prompted thee to wish to have the engagement dissolved, in a manner that will reflect dishonour on thee. . . . Thou art left without Father or Mother, but not

without many relatives who deeply feel for thee in the slippery dangerous stage of life thou art now in, and much desire thy preservation and advancement in everything that's praiseworthy. . . ." After advising him to stay more at home and improve his mind with good reading, and "be preserved from mingling with those whose time, or too great a part of it, is spent in dissipation and folly" he concludes: "With the tenders of kind Love, wherein thy Aunt joins, and sincere desires for thy preservation from the many snares which attend the youthful mind,

Thy affectionate Uncle,

Isaac Wilson."[1]

The writer has read a letter on similar lines in the *Life of Samuel Fothergill* (by George Crosfield). In this case the young Friend is strongly advised to re-adopt the Quaker dress as a safeguard, on the same lines, one imagines, as the Salvation Army uniform is viewed to-day.

12/11/1776.

Isaac Wilson writes a long letter to "Friend Richardson," with whom he is not personally acquainted, about a neighbour and highly esteemed Friend and Elder, who is in financial difficulties, asking him to use his influence with two rich bachelor brothers of this Friend, living in his neighbourhood, to advance the sum of £300 to get him out of his difficulties. The letter continues: "I never felt so much for a man in like circumstances in all my life and therefore cannot but entreat thee to be as expeditious in this matter as possible, and let me know

[1] The recipient of this letter appears to have been a successful man later, so let us hope that the uncle's good advice was followed.

the result as soon as may be ; if they lived within 20 miles of me I should not be many days without seeing them and using my endeavours to prevail on them to save the Family on whose behalf I write, from sinking, as aforesaid. . . . Thus much on behalf of the disconsolate valuable Family

from Thy assured Friend, though unknown,

Isaac Wilson."

On 17/8/1778.

Another letter is written on behalf of "an honest industrious poor man," who had been induced to sign a bond by the statement "that not one shilling would ever be demanded of him in consequence thereof. So he, poor man, was weak enough to be drawn into the snare." The letter concludes : "If I have here wrote or advanced anything inconsistent or by the point, it is for want of better information, and no design of bearing too hard upon any, and I only wish that impartial justice may be executed in this affair.

I am thy respectful Friend,

Isaac Wilson."

There is an interesting letter dated 31. 8. 1780, very shortly after the opening of Ackworth School, to someone who had sought his advice as to putting in a Scouring Plant at the School. Isaac Wilson took the matter up "the next day with the person who executes our Mill work, desiring him to make out a plan and estimate of our Washing Mill and appurtenances, to be worked by a horse, instead of a water wheel." The matter is gone into very fully and with considerable practical ability, and further information promised in a day or two, when he receives fuller details.

On 14. 12. 1780.

Isaac Wilson writes a letter to an unknown correspondent addressed as "Kind Friend" in which he urges the need for more considerate treatment of the poor, and continues: "After the many laws already made an amendment seems quite necessary, which the great sufferings and cries, from the distressed poor, loudly call for. Many Townships in our neighbourhood are in the practice of contracting for the maintenance of their poor, for so much money per annum, with such persons as they may meet with, who are willing to undertake this business on the lowest terms. These are generally found to be people of indifferent character, devoid of the feelings of humanity for the distressed, and are under a strong temptation, in order to make themselves a saving bargain, to starve the poor creatures who are worn out by age and infirmity." The letter then dwells on the difficulties of those who have moved into other districts and cannot obtain relief, and concludes: "Now would it not be just and reasonable that such poor, falling into distress as aforesaid, should apply to the parish Officers where they reside, and that they should administer to their necessities and immediately apprize the Officers of the Parish or Township, to which such Paupers belong, of his or their situation, and that the money expended for the relief of the poor person or family should be refunded by the Parish or Township to which they belong. This would prevent many suffering for want in cases of accidents or sickness, and the burden would rest on those who ought to bear it.

The hardships and distress which happen to many, as above, have been a painful reflection to many minds for years past and I should rejoice to see a proper remedy applied, and hope I shall be excused the freedom now

taken, as I am not seeking anything for myself, but that the distresses of the poor might be alleviated.

I am thy respectful and obliged Friend,

ISAAC WILSON."

On 27. 1. 1779.

Isaac Wilson writes to "Friend Harrison" begging him for the sake of a widow and her daughters, by whom he had been consulted, to take steps to wind up a Trust in which he was the surviving Trustee, though apparently never having acted. Isaac Wilson, after saying how many Trusteeships he has undertaken, continues: "I therefore cannot well avoid, on behalf of the poor family above mentioned, craving thy assistance, as being surviving Trustee. . . . I hope I shall be excused in this freedom and favoured with a line by way of answer hereto, as soon as may be, which will be acceptable to the family for whom I take upon me this trouble.

Thy Friend unknown,

ISAAC WILSON."

Writing on 26. 2. 1781. to "Dear Friend Thomas Corbyn" a long letter on Wolstenholme's Tract and other Friends' Concerns, we have, at the close, the first indication of old age creeping on. "I have been more confined for four months past than for 50 years before, principally in a Rheumatic Complaint flying about in almost every part, disabling me from getting out of doors for some weeks together, but for about two weeks past I have been able to get out a little, and hope when warmer weather comes I may be further relieved from the complaint."

The business letters refer to matters many and various.

1773, to a bale of goods dropped in the water and spoiled at Newcastle, whence it was to be shipped to Norwich.

Had he known he would have ordered them back to be scoured and finished afresh. After making an allowance the letter concludes: "I am not unwilling to make thee a further allowance out of a future parcel, in which as no one can, so no one shall, serve thee on better terms than

Thy obliged ready Friend,

Isaac Wilson."

It is interesting to note that goods going from Kendal to Norwich were sent by pack-horse, north to Newcastle, thence by sea to Norwich.

Letter written in 1773 presses for the payment of an account, handed in 1771, for dyeing worsted and yarn for the use of Sir James Lowther's Carpet manufacture. The letter continues: "What profit I got by this job must be eaten up in interest, it being now about five years since I began to dye said worsted and yarn, for the purposes aforesaid, and never yet received a shilling, though I must have dyed some packs of the same. This is hard upon me, for the Salters or Merchants, of whom I buy my Dying Goods, would send me to gaol, sooner than give me one fourth of this credit, but I never desired it at their hands. I therefore hope thy candid consideration of this affair will produce the effect I wish for, and have a natural right to expect. I am with all due regard waiting an answer hereto.

Thy ready Friend,

Isaac Wilson."

The next letter seems so characteristic that it is copied in full:

Kendal, 19*th.* 9*th M. of* 1776.

Friend Tipping,

Thy Letter of the 10th. Cur't came to hand by last Post, the Contents whereof we duly note, & own

we are not a little surprised at the same, for if we should come to London & buy a parcel of Goods at a fixed price from a sample produced & upon the same getting to hand, we should write the House from whence we had the Goods that they did not answer our expectation, that they were too dear & that we could buy Lower of their neighbours &c what would the People of this House think or say of us, we leave Thee to judge.

The Goods we sent Thee were charged at the price mentioned to Thee & the same quality of what was shewn Thee in our Warehouse, & we have in the course of one Year past, sold to one House in Town some hundreds of pieces of the same kind of Goods, quality & price to a farthing, w'ch House is well acquainted w'th the People of our Trade here & have tried the principal part of them, & we are well assured if they would have been accommodated w'th those Goods from another Hand here at a penny or ½ p yd lower, or so much better in quality, we should not have had their orders.

We are well assured none of our neighbours have it in their power to sell the same quality of Goods at 1d p yd lower or 1d p yd better at the price we charged ours, neither shall we abate 1d nor ½ p yd, nor yet order them elsewhere, they have been once sold at as low a price as any one can possibly afford the same quality, we therefore don't intend to have the trouble of selling them a second time, but shall very willingly leave Thee in future to supply thy self from our neighbours who can, in thy opinion, do so much better & are thy Friends, but not to be trod upon.

Isaac Wilson & Son.

It is found from Isaac Wilson's accounts that not long after this "Friend Tipping" paid a com-

position to his creditors, so that Isaac may have felt that his stubborn resistance to being "trodden upon" had not proved a paying proposition.

1780.

Letter to distant relative in Australia, referring to an old debt, 26 years previous, towards which he has received no payment, "which is hard upon me, having a large family to support by my endeavours, and I have now nothing to plead but the moral justice of my claim, and as I have been informed that the World hath smiled upon thee of later years, therefore I hope thou wilt take the matter into consideration, and be disposed to make some satisfaction, as length of time does not cancel the obligation or make void the justice and equity of the case. So I have taken the liberty to draw upon thee for the above sum in favour of my kinsman, John Wakefield, who purposes taking a trip to Australia, and hope upon mature consideration of the affair thou wilt be disposed to pay the same, or some portion in lieu of the whole, as I have nothing to rely upon but thy honour and upright intuition. Here I must leave the matter, and am thy Friend,

ISAAC WILSON."

10. 6. 1780.

To "Respected Friend James Freeman," a Commission Agent, seeking to develop a trade in Holland: "We have of late been thinking that there is an article in our way, the only manufacture of the kind we know of in the kingdom being carried on in our neighbourhood, and we apprehend Holland is the principal market for those goods, and that a good many are tended there, and as none are able to furnish with that article better terms than we

can, we are induced to give thee a line on the subject. The goods are known by the name of Broad Linseys. . . ."

The following advertisement framed at Castle Mills, Kendal, seems to show that a portion of the mills was occupied by Isaac Wilson in 1756 This, it is thought, was the large mill spreading across the mill-race.

SEAL OF THE BOROUGH AT HEAD " 15.K.K.76."

Advertisement.

To be let to farm for any Term exceeding twenty-one years, at Sergeant Chamber's Inn-holder in the Fish Market in Kendal, on Friday the fourteenth day of November 1755, to enter at Martinmas 1756, Castle Millns, belonging to the Corporation of Kendal aforesaid, consisting of one large convenient Malt Kiln, with Lead Cisterns and suitable Granaries, also one Drying Kiln for Oats, &c. One pair of Blue and one pair of Grey Stones for Grinding Wheat, one pair of Grey Stones for grinding Oats, Two Boulting Milns, one Crush Miln, three Snuff Milns, four Frizeing Milns, one Fulling Stock for Milling Leather, Hemp, &c one good Dwelling House, one new Built Barn, Stable and other suitable Outhouses, two Closes, by computation, Eight Acres of exceeding good Land, with all other Appurtenances & privileges now under farm to James Wilson.

Any person minded to view the Premises may in the mean time apply to Mr. Joseph Simpson and Mr. Robert Dixon, the Chamberlain of the said Corporation.

Further particulars will be exhibited at the Time of Letting. Kendal. Printed by Tho. Ashburner.

How much of this extraordinary "omnium gatherum" was displaced to make way for the plant required, does not transpire. The mills are supposed to have been erected originally for the purpose of grinding corn for the castle. There is a much later note in the Annals of Kendal: "1805-6, Castle Mills built for the manufacture of woollens by William Braithwaite and Son and Isaac and William Wilson." The property belonged to the Corporation until 1853, when it was purchased by J. J. and W. Wilson for £5,000, and subsequently largely rebuilt and modernized.

Some appreciation of Isaac Wilson's business may be obtained from his annual accounts for stock-taking purposes. These have been preserved —neatly folded and docketed—for each year from 1742 (two years after his marriage) to 1773. During this period, notwithstanding his large family, his capital in the business grew from £751 to £6,011. His list of debtors include many familiar names, often for considerable amounts, such as W. and J. Birkbeck, Thos. and Wm. Dillworth, Brother Dillworth, John Crewdson, Thos. Crewdson, Mary Wakefield and Son, John Wakefield, John Whitwell, Jnr., Geo. Braithwaite, John Barnard, Smith Wright and Gray, Peter How "Esquire" (which reads strangely in a Quaker's accounts), Quarterly Meeting, Ambleside Turnpike,[1] etc.

[1] Amongst Isaac Wilson's old papers is one referring to the

The list of his creditors suggests the days long before the opening of banks in Kendal, when a trusted Friend was often approached to find use in his business for the savings of relations and friends. Among these creditors we find the following :

Father John Wilson, Father Anthony Wilson, Brothers John, George and Anthony Wilson, Cousin Jonathan Wilson, Son John Wilson. Children's Money. Brother Waithman, Uncle J. Crewdson, Rachel Crewdson & Son, Isaac Crewdson, Thomas Crewdson, John Whitwell, Elizabeth Holme, Geo. Crosfield, Thos. Crosfield, John Wakefield, Bryan Lancaster's Trust, Quarterly Meeting, Monthly Meeting &c.

Isaac Wilson passed away at Kendal, 18. 8. 1785, leaving a married son, two married and four unmarried daughters.

The unmarried daughters all married eventually.

Isaac Wilson's character as viewed by his contemporaries is summed up later, but in reviewing a great deal of his correspondence, one is struck with his fine, rugged, managing, yet sympathetic and kindly nature.

In business he appears to have been a just man,

widening and forming of Turnpike Roads in Cumberland and Westmorland, by Act passed in 1762. These included the road from Keswick to Cockermouth over Whinlatter, Keswick to Ambleside, over Dunmail and forward to Kendal ; and from Plumgarths Cross to Windermere. Also from Keswick to Penrith.

These Turnpike Roads were under a Board which included many well-known Westmorland names. They were financed by means of loans at 4½ per cent. on the security of the Turnpike fees ; hence this entry for a sum lent by Isaac Wilson which was originally £100.

with a high ideal, expecting others to act from the same motives. He felt that his business was honestly run, his prices legitimate, and this being so, Quaker though he was, he was "not to be trod upon."

As the father of seven daughters it often appears that the provision for this large family caused him anxiety, but his treatment of their love affairs appears to have been wise and considerate, with no wish to interfere.

In his day Friends were not able to take much part in public matters, otherwise a man of his type should have had much useful outside work to do, as his letter on the pauper question shows him a man of wide sympathy. He was evidently considered a man of sound judgment, and was ready to take up the cause of those who were in distress, which he considered remediable, and to rebuke kindly, but wisely, those whom he considered negligent in their duty.

Some of those who read Isaac Wilson's letters may come to the conclusion that he was rather a "meddlesome" old man, who was too ready to interfere in other people's business, especially so when viewed in the light of that comforting modern tag :

Every man
Has a plan
Of his own
It is best
For the rest
To let him alone.

This, however, was not the attitude of the old Quakers, who were keenly solicitous for the good name of the Society and the actions of those who composed it. They rather believed that, to a considerable extent, they *were* "their brother's keeper" and, from this view, doubtless, much of the "visiting" of Friend families emanated, with the object of keeping the witness of the Society, especially on such matters as worldliness, dress, and simplicity, clear and manifest.

Through the kindness of Miss A. L. Somervell, an old poem has come into the writer's hands, copied into an old book of extracts, probably collected by one of Isaac Wilson's family, and entitled "Lines in Memory of Isaac Wilson who died 18th of 8th month, 1785, T. Wilkinson." The poem is long and possesses no poetical merit, but is interesting as showing the points in Isaac Wilson's character which struck a contemporary Friend :

The Church's firm support her fairest Pillar gone.

The gracious form and pure exalted Friend.

A cheerful labour for the good of all.

A steady counsel solid and sincere,
A reason candid forcible and clear.

The generous bounty of thy open heart,
Thy open heart that never turned aside
From lowly want through avarice or pride.

Oft have I seen with mild and gentle grace
Domestic pleasure brighten in thy face,
While joyful friends a happy circle made,
What time thy wit like temperate sunbeams played.
That serious dignity, that voice of power
Which met and well became th' important hour
Was oft relaxed to pleasure's sweetest sound,
When cheerful Innocence went harmless round.
The simple Tale, the sportings of a child
Thy tender breast of many a care beguiled.
Through thee the frail and feeble sons of earth
Have often found a more than mortal birth.

Extracted from *Piety Promoted.* Isaac Wilson of Kendal.

After parentage, youth, apprenticeship, and marriage are referred to, the account continues: "In his conduct towards his children, beautifully uniting the authority of a parent, and the familiar persuasive influence of a friend." The account then recites how freely he approved his wife's journeys in spite of the trial of separation, how he worked for love and unity among Friends and was "Much engaged to give private admonitions." About his 40th year he became a Minister, "in the exercise of which his labours were edifying, and he was lively and fervent."

Although his family was large and his engagements of a public and private nature many, yet he so ordered them as not to interfere with his religious duty, being engaged constantly to attend meetings, both for worship and dis-

cipline ; frequently attended the Yearly Meeting in London and, in company with other friends, visited the monthly and quarterly meetings in Ireland, Scotland, &c.

His disposition was hospitable and charitable ; his conversation was informing and edifying, accompanied with affability. Being of sound judgment and integrity, he was often applied to by friends and others for his advice (which he freely communicated) and to be an arbitrator in differences, by which means he contributed to the peace of many families. . . .

The two last years of his life he was much tried by indisposition, but the following expressings show the situation of his mind, which he delivered the day before his death, in the presence of some of his children, with great power and energy, though under great bodily weakness.

I know not how it may be ; I may remain with you a while longer, or be removed at this time ; but I am easy as to the event. . . . I am thankful I am not forsaken ; the Lord has been with me all my life long, and poured down his blessings upon me ; and He will, my dear children, be with and support you if you are concerned to seek Him. O, the matchless loving kindness of our God.

He died on the 18th of the eight month, 1785 ; and was interred in Friends burial ground at Kendal on the 23rd of the same, after a large and solemn meeting held on the occasion : aged seventy, having been a minister thirty years.

Among the papers retained in the family is "A Testimony from the Monthly Meeting of Kendal, in Westmorland, concerning our valuable Friend Isaac Wilson deceased." This is fuller than, but

very similar to, the account in *Piety Promoted*, but mentions also :

He filled the office of Clerk to the Preparative Meeting of Kendal & the Quarterly Meeting for the County above thirty years, with great Propriety ; being exemplary in his Condescension & Deference to the Judgment of others. In the Station of an Elder he was diligently attentive to the Duties thereof, watching over the Ministers for their Preservation & being ready to administer tender Caution & Council for their Help & Strength.

CHAPTER IX

JOHN AND SARAH WILSON

John Wilson, born 30. 4. 1748. } Married
Sarah Dillworth, born 13. 5. 1754. } 8. 9. 1779.

It is not known with certainty where John and Sarah Wilson lived on their marriage in 1779, but the initials and date on the water tank already referred

I S
to, W , seem to point to Isaac's having vacated
1781

the family house in favour of his son, soon after the marriage, settling elsewhere with his four unmarried daughters, possibly at No. 14, Stramongate, which, according to report, was occupied by the family at one time.

The name of Cicely Dillworth has always been greatly honoured in the Crewdson family and doubtless her younger sister, Sarah, in settling in Kendal, valued her sisterly help in taking up her new duties and responsibilities there.

There on 6. 8. 1780 their eldest son, Isaac, was born, and, to his parents' grief, died in infancy.

In 1781 a daughter, named Esther (after Sarah's mother) ; followed in 1783 by Rachel.

On 24. 12. 1784 another son, Isaac, was born, and on 11. 4. 1786, William. On 5. 5. 1788 Dillworth was born, but only lived six weeks, his mother, to the great grief of the family, passing away a fortnight later (1. 7. 1788), aged 34, after a short married life of less than nine years, leaving four children, the eldest aged 7.

The Friends' forms of Birth Certificate seem to have been special ones and four of those of the birth of John and Sarah's children are retained in the family. Isaac (1), Rachel, Isaac (2), and Dillworth.

The first of these reads as follows :

On the sixth Day of the eighth Month called August One Thousand Seven Hundred & Eighty was born in Stramongate, Kendal in the Parish of Kirkby Kendal in the County of Westmoreland unto John Wilson, Shearman-Dyer and Sarah his wife a Son, who was named Isaac.

We who were present at the said Birth, have subscribed our Names as Witnesses thereof.

John Claxton, Surg^{n}
Mary Dillworth.
Cicely Crewdson.

Cicely Crewdson signs all four forms and the fourth form is signed also by Deborah Benson.

It is not known which of the unmarried sisters first undertook the care of the young family, but as Rachel and Margaret both married in 1790, it

is certain that John's sister, Sarah, took up the duty then, and it seems probable that the motherless children had a somewhat spartan bringing up.

The following story has been handed down in the family. At a Quarterly Meeting Dinner in the Stramongate House, at which Friends from a distance were present, Sarah was carving a goose. She was a good conversationalist, and was so busy talking, that she did not notice when the last plate was removed by the maid. She talked on while carving, and laid the next helping on the tablecloth ; having a very quick temper, she angrily called out, " Why could none of you tell me there was no plate, you fools ! " Whether the last words were added to improve the story, or showed the effect of her rough business life, is not known.

Sarah finally, in 1806, married John Abbatt, it is said, as his fourth wife. Report says that one day he quietly remarked, " Sarah, I have been considering that I have had thee the same length of time as my other dear wives." On which she told him straight that she was not ready to follow them. She subsequently outlived him.

Little seems to be known of the life of John Wilson, but a little book has come into the writer's hands, through the kindness of Mr. H. A. Wilson, which throws some light on the business which he had inherited from his father. The fly-leaf is inscribed as follows :

1787. 1*st mo.* 1*st.*

This Book contains a list of the Debts owing to and by John Wilson.

Inventory of Stock to ascertain the Profit and Loss in Trade.

The book contains details of the years 1786, 7, 8, and 9.

Among the debtors to John Wilson are a large number of Friends' names: H. Priestman, Jno. Rowntree, A. and J. Rawlinson, Isaac Rawlinson, J. S. and M. Fisher, W. Abbatt, T. M. Waterhouse, W. Birkbeck and Co., Thos. Crewdson, T. and S. Crewdson, J. Wakefield and Sons, Sam'l Crewdson, J. Waithman, Robt. Braithwaite, Isaac Whitwell, etc. There are also many Dutch names, showing that the trade, mentioned in one of Isaac Wilson's letters, had materialized.

On the other side there are many entries representing money invested, often temporarily, in the business. There was no bank in Kendal until 1788, and it seems to have been the habit, among Friends, to use such a business as this, largely as a bank is used. Among such entries the following are extracted:

Thos. Crewdson, £511. R. S. and M. W. (J. W's unmarried sisters) £2880. George Braithwaite, £208. G and R Benson, £21. Hannah Wilson, £156. (probably wife of J. W's uncle George). Hadwen and Crosfield,

£17. H. and R. Whitwell, £570, Margaret Crewdson, £513. "Children's Money," £10 (increasing to £60 in 1790). Castle Mills Co., £115. Kendal Mo. Meeting £20 ! Quarterly Meeting £20 ! Father's effects £430.

The assets, other than stock, appear as House and Warehouse, £700 ; Lease Mills, £300 ; (? Castle Mills), Aynum, £100 ; Field, £400 ; Live Stock, hay, etc., £50.

The profit shown annually is in addition to the family's living expenses and varies from £243 to £412.

The writer is indebted to Rev. J. J. Wilson, the eldest great-grandson of Isaac Wilson, for a copy of the indenture of his apprenticeship in 1799, for the term of seven years, to his father, John Wilson, which is nearly identical with John Wilson's indenture, previously quoted, but omits the father's promise that he shall "in due and reasonable manner chastise and correct him." Possibly John may have felt that, in his own case, this promise had been kept too literally, or it may be that the paralysis referred to later had already begun. The document is signed as under :

JOHN WILSON (with his accustomed elaborate flourish)
ISAAC WILSON.

Witnesses :
GEO. BRAITHWAITE (John's brother-in-law)
JOHN BEETHOM.

The document begins as follows :

This indenture made the first day of July in the thirty ninth year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the third by the Grace of God of Great Britain France and Ireland, King defender of the Faith and so forth and in the year of our Lord God one thousand seven hundred and ninety nine.

The claim to the kingship of France, so late as 1799, cannot have made for an *entente cordiale*.

While on the subject of John Wilson's business, the letter given below is of interest. John Woolman, as already stated, when in England, stayed with Jane Crosfield (the great-great-grandmother of the writer's wife), at Low Park, Preston Patrick, near Kendal. She had visited America in the Ministry in 1760. From Low Park John Woolman, as appears from his Journal, visited the Wilsons at Kendal, and the following was written by him to John Wilson, a fortnight before his death, only one later letter being quoted. Extracted from the *Journal and Essays of John Woolman*, edited by Amelia Mott Gummere.

York, 22. 9. 1772.

Beloved Friend,

When I followed the Trade of a Tailor, I had a feeling of that which pleased the proud mind in people, and growing uneasie, was strengthened to leave off that which was superfluous in my Trade.

When I was at your house, I believe I had a sense of

the pride of people being gratified in some of the business thou followest, and I feel a concern in pure love to endeavour to inform thee of it.

Christ our leader is worthy of being followed in his leadings at all times. The Enemy gets many on his side.

O ! that we may not be divided between the two, but may be wholly on the side of Christ.

In true love to you all I remain thy friend,

JOHN WOOLMAN.

From the appendix to the same book, we read :

Samuel Smith, a Minister of Philadelphia, in 1789 visited John Wilson at Kendal, son of Isaac and Rachel, "Took tea at George Braithwaites whose wife is a sister of John Wilson and much resembles her mother. John (Woolman) had the highest regard for both mother and son."

John Wilson's little motherless family grew up in similar surroundings to those of their uncles' and aunts' childhood. They attended the old Friends' Meeting House, later to be demolished, but had the advantage of the New School, previously described, and the greatly improved education of the Dalton regime, with its excellent scientific training.

Travelling was still almost impossible for families, but they had in Kendal and district an increased circle of cousins and relations, who doubtless did what they could to lighten their lot ; in Kendal, John Whitwells, George Braithwaites, Thomas Crewdsons, George Bensons and John Wakefields ;

Waithmans at Yealand ; Wilsons at High Wray, and Birkbeck cousins at Settle.

An amusing story has come down in the family of a Dillworth uncle who was so stout that he always engaged two places in the coach. One day, on entering the coach, he found two commercial travellers sitting one on each side. He explained his two tickets, but to bait the Quaker, they stuck to their right to maintain their seats. Shortly afterwards they passed a chimney-sweep on the road, when Dillworth made to open the window to invite him to complete the party, but his companions, realizing that the game was up, surrendered him his double seat. This may have been the Uncle Dillworth, referred to in John Wilson's letter to his father as not being able to walk much.

In these days the town was slowly advancing. It had come out of the darkness of the Middle Ages by adopting street lighting, by oil lamps in 1767, so that the individual lantern became less necessary ; but changes came slowly, and one can imagine the interest with which each development was watched.

It is noted in local chronology that "in 1784 umbrellas were first seen in the town, made of oil-cloth. They had long sticks to walk withal." In 1785 the first mail-coach from London to Scotland passed through the town. In 1788 the first banks were introduced. Wakefield's Bank in

Stricklandgate, and "The Kendal Bank," originally Maude, Wilson and Crewdson, later W. D. Crewdson and Sons, the banks in 1840 being amalgamated as Wakefield, Crewdson and Co., or the Kendal Bank. The original Crewdson Bank was in Stramongate, in the house with the double steps just below St. George's Hall. Many Friends, who had prospered in trade, and to whom most professions were still closed, established private banks about this time, the Wakefields and Crewdsons among the number, as also the Birkbecks and Dillworths.

Public confidence in some of these quiet, careful Quakers was great, and it is well known that the Westmorland farmers when cashing a cheque generally preferred to receive "Jackie Wakefield" notes, bearing the signature of the man they knew, to the much more doubtful paper of the Bank of England!

That changes came slowly in the Kendal of old days is shown by the following:

1791.

Bull baiting suppressed by the Corporation.

Prior to this it was the practice to bait every bull, on the "Beast Banks" above the town. There, on the centre of the green was a Bull Ring, to which the poor beast was tied while baited by dogs, and it is said that the butchers rarely ventured to slaughter a bull which had not been publicly

baited. If anyone did so, he had to hang a sign-board out, by official order, with "Bull beef" inscribed upon it, or burn a lighted lamp, so long as any unbaited beef remained unsold, or, in default, be subject to a fine of 3s. 4d. However, in consequence of repeated accidents to those who ventured too near the maddened animal, the custom was suppressed by the Corporation in 1791. It would be pleasanter to think that finer feelings induced the suppression.

It is said that the ring had a further purpose. The roughs of the town gathered there at special times, and a challenge to fight all comers was expressed by taking hold of the ring.

By the end of the century, the coaching and other wheel traffic through the town had increased so much that it became necessary to rebuild or widen the main bridges, and to remove familiar landmarks from the streets. The old Market Cross disappeared, the old maypole, nearly opposite the Parish Church, the centre of revelry on certain days in the year, was removed in 1792, and in 1803 the picturesque group of shops, built in the middle of Highgate, just opposite the present town hall, and known as the "New Biggin," was taken down.

Postal Communication. Extract from the *Annals of Kendal*. "Up to the close of the last century, the postal communication was infrequent and snail-paced. About

1780–90, one, John Jennings, landlord of the Unicorn public house at Kendal, carried the letters between Kendal and Lancaster, by a horse and cart, John going to Lancaster one day and returning to Kendal the next, which was thought to be a great achievement, compared with former times. The only intermediate post-office was at Burton. Country people got their letters when they had occasion to visit the towns named, by calling for them at the post-office. Sometimes once a week, sometimes once a month."

In 1802 an event of national interest occurred in Kendal, in the death there of George Romney. He was apprenticed in 1750 to an itinerant painter, Christopher Steele, living temporarily in Kendal, and in 1756 married Mary Abbot there. For six years after this, Kendal was his headquarters, and here he was much indebted to the wise patronage of Col. George Wilson, of Abbot Hall. In 1762 he left Kendal, and his wife, to win fame in London, only returning there once until, in 1802, he came home, broken down in health, to be nursed by the faithful Kendal woman whom he had married forty-six years before.

John Wilson is said to have been afflicted with paralysis for some years before his death and to have been devotedly nursed by his younger daughter, Rachel, while the elder daughter, Esther, helped her Aunt Sarah to run the business, taking her share of the travelling on horseback.

John Wilson only survived his wife by thirteen years, and passed away 3. 2. 1801, leaving his family of four, Esther 19, Rachel 17, Isaac 16, and William 14, in the hands of his sister Sarah for the next five years.

The writer has no means of forming any judgment as to the character of John Wilson, as, unfortunately, he left no copies of letters, as did his father. John Woolman evidently felt a sincere affection for him, but he may have been overshadowed by his capable father and mother and seven sisters, and crushed by the early death of his wife.

John's sister, Sarah, may have had her failings, but she had also an indomitable pluck, which, on John's loss of health, enabled her to take control of his business, which she not only managed successfully, but undertook the necessary travelling on horseback, with saddle-bags.

The son Isaac, as has been seen, was apprenticed to his father in 1799 for seven years, only two of which had expired when the father died, when he probably came under the authority of Aunt Sarah, and it is said he was greatly relieved when, in 1806, he assumed the conduct of affairs, his aunt being married in that year. His brother William joined him in partnership shortly afterwards, when they traded as "Isaac and William Wilson."

The next years saw rapid changes in the family.

On 10. 3. 1806.

The Aunt, Sarah Wilson, was married at Kendal to John Abbatt of Plymouth.

On 12. 11. 1806.

Esther was married at Kendal (aged 24) to John Wilkinson, of High Wycombe.

On 14. 4. 1808.

Isaac was married at Leeds (aged 23) to Mary, daughter of John and Susannah Jowitt.

There is a tradition, both in the Wilson and Jowitt families, that both the brothers, Isaac and William, loved Susannah Jowitt, said to have been the most charming of the sisters, but her delicacy was a bar to marriage, and later Isaac married her sister Mary, and in 1715 William married her sister Hannah.

On 6. 8. 1808 Rachel was married at Kendal (aged 25) to Josiah Forster, of Tottenham.

CHAPTER X

THE SEVEN DAUGHTERS

Before closing this record it may be of interest to give some further particulars of the seven daughters of Isaac and Rachel Wilson.

Dorothy Whitwell's early death at Kendal in 1774, after nine years of married life, during which six children were born, makes it improbable that much record of her life remains. In a letter written by her mother, shortly after Dorothy's death, she says: "Her concern for the poor was remarkable."

The children who survived her were :

Isaac 1765 to 1835. Married at Bradford 1806, Hannah Maria Fisher.

Hannah 1769 to 1835. Married at Kendal 1800, George Coates of Stockton on Tees.

Rachel 1774 to 1833. Married at Kendal 1796, Edward Pease of Darlington.

Deborah Braithwaite, who had married George Braithwaite, of Kendal, in 1767, spent her married life in the Braithwaite family house opposite the New Inn. She died at Kendal in 1821, aged 78, having had seven children, of whom five survived her.

Rachel 1768 to 1854. Married at Preston Patrick 1791, Samuel Lloyd of Birmingham.

Deborah 1775 to 1844. Married at Kendal 1798, William Dillworth Crewdson of Kendal.

George 1777 to 1853. Married at Birmingham 1806, Mary Lloyd.

Isaac 1781 to 1861. Married at Birmingham 1808, Anna Lloyd.

Dorothy 1783 to 1861. Married at Kendal 1807, Robert Benson of Kendal.

Deborah Braithwaite was very much beloved by her family, and her home greatly valued by the sisters at a distance, who loved to return to Kendal and their old haunts, and for the last twenty years since John's death in 1801 this was the only Kendal home of that generation remaining. The writer concludes from reading the life of Anna Braithwaite that Deborah was of a gentle spirit, somewhat overshadowed by her young and capable daughter-in-law.

Rachel Smith, who had married Joseph Smith, of London, in 1790, and was childless, was the second of the seven sisters to pass away (on 31. 1. 1814). She and her sister, Mary Stacey, were visiting their sister Deborah Braithwaite at Kendal. Rachel, though apparently well, had an apoplectic fit and died the next day, to the grief of her sisters. Anna Braithwaite writes :

10. 2. 1814.

This was a memorable day. The remains of the deceased

were interred after a Solemn Meeting. Our Aunt Stacey & our Aunt Bragg both addressed the Meeting & our dear Aunt Stacey was engaged in supplication at the grave side.

As there is no mention of the husband, it is presumed that he had died earlier. In the notice in the *Annual Monitor* of her death she is described as " This much valued individual."

Elizabeth Messer, the fourth daughter, was married to Josiah Messer, of London, at Kendal, 11. 8. 1786. Isaac Wilson's letter to him, already quoted, was written 7. 6. 1785, two months before his (Isaac's) death. There were seven children, six of whom survived their mother, who died in 1821.

Hannah Messer. 1787–1845.
Rachel 1789–1837. Married at Westminster 1813, James Ireland Wright of Bristol.
Elizabeth 1792–1851. Married at Westminster 1814, Matthew Wright.
Josiah 1794–1864. Married at Shaftesbury 1817, Catherine Hannam.
Robert 1795–1878. Married.
Sarah Messer. 1796–1867.

Mary Stacey, the fifth daughter, who had married George Stacey at Kendal, 21. 12. 1781, spent most of her married life at Tottenham, where, with her husband, she took a valuable share in the Ministry of the meetings in the London district. She was

greatly beloved by all her relatives, and her home at Tottenham became a centre for the sisters, nephews, and nieces to draw up to on their frequent visits to London for Yearly Meeting, or for business.

The Testimony of the Monthly Meeting mentions that she was a Minister for forty-three years, and travelled much in the Ministry in eastern and northern counties, surviving her husband for twenty years. In 1847 and 1851 she visited Dublin Yearly Meeting.

A letter, dated 1830, is in existence from Charles Bragg to his cousin, H. M. Whitwell, in which he speaks of his mother's journey to London to stay with her sister, Mary Stacey, with whom she

> spent 10 days very delightfully in that interesting circle. . . . On last 2nd day Aunt Abbatt & Elizabeth reached Tottenham. Thou may imagine what a pleasant group. It was truly delightful & deeply interesting to see the three sisters—the last survivors of that generation, meeting in such sweet unity & harmony, in good health, and though not unmindful that time had conducted them far on their pilgrimage, still cheerful & lively—they seemed to reanimate each other & as the shadows of the days of their youth flitted before them recount various incidents & revive various histories. Aunt Mary (Stacey) is better than we expected to have seen her. Aunt Abbatt retains all her wonted activity & perseverance.

In these days we should use blunter language to describe the meeting of the three old dears and their " cracks " about old Kendal days.

Mary Stacey died at Tottenham, 28. 2. 1836, aged 80. There were six children, all of whom survived her.

Isaac 1783–1846.
Rebecca 1784–1866. Married in London 1806, Abraham Beaumont.
George 1786–1857. Married at Birmingham 1818, Deborah Lloyd.
Rachel 1788–1849.
Mary 1792–1876.
Deborah 1793–1877. Married at Tottenham 1817, Wyatt George Gibson.

Sarah Abbatt, the sixth daughter, was married to John Abbatt, of Plymouth, at Kendal, 1806. She died at Plymouth 1. 7. 1843, having outlived all the other members of the family. She kept in close touch with the Kendal relations and welcomed visits from nephews and nieces in search of a milder winter climate.

She appears to have been a "character" to the last, and in later years when visiting her Kendal relations always came in her own chaise and horses, which were put up in the Stramongate stables, and in this she paid her calls in the district. In these she is said to have been acquisitive, very ready to receive presents of good things, and a story was handed down through the Wilsons' groom of a dreadful smell in the chaise being traced, to his

delight, to a forgotten cheese, which she had acquired on one of these expeditions.

She appears to have taken a practical interest in the poor, and wrote to her nephew, Isaac Wilson, of Kendal, at the time of distress following the Napoleonic Wars :

PLYMOUTH, 14. 1. 1817.

. . . It is a comfort you can keep on your workmen & that so few are wanting at your place. It is very different here & so general the distress that it takes up much of my time & a great deal of the thoughts, how it is best to relieve them & this is much the case with most thoughtful people here. A vast of time is given up & some property for their help.

Then follows description of relief works :

They are busy making soup which is much sought after & seems as good relief as anything tried : Although much is done I fear many suffer much. I hope none are in a perishing state.

Sarah Abbatt, notwithstanding her eccentricities, appears to have been a valuable Friend, and was associated with her nephews' wife, Anna Braithwaite, in a visit to Friends in Cumberland in 1817, and to the Eastern Counties in 1819. Writing in his private Journal of their visit to Norwich (28. 6. 1819) Joseph John Gurney says :

Our dear friends & cousins Sarah Abbatt & Anna Braithwaite spent the evening with us & went away the

next morning. Their visit & spiritual labours with us were very acceptable.

One of Sarah Abbatt's step-daughters describes her as "more than a mother to me," and Mary Wilson, writing 24. 7. 1843, says :

We have been satisfied that we made the effort to go to Plymouth. It was a comfort to mingle with many who loved & honoured our dear Aunt, whose memory will long be precious.

Margaret, the youngest of the seven daughters, was married to Hadwen Bragg, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, at Kendal, on 9. 11. 1790, aged 29, and died there on 2. 6. 1840, aged 79. The children who survived her were :

Rachel, 1791–1854. Married at Newcastle, 1814, Jonathan Priestman.
John Hadwen Bragg 1797–1876.
Charles Bragg 1801–1874. Married at Plymouth, 1835, Susannah Hancock Balkwill.

From "A Testimony from Newcastle Monthly Meeting concerning Margaret Bragg deceased" we get one glimpse into her girlhood. After emphasizing her early interest in religious matters the testimony continues :

She lost her valuable mother by death when about 14 years of age. As she grew up to maturity the salutary restraints of the Cross were at times irksome to her active

mind. She was tempted to elude the vigilance of her surviving Parent and indulge in light, speculative & unprofitable reading, of which practice she had afterwards bitterly to repent, when her mind was renewedly brought to yield to the convicting influence of the Lord's power. . . .

From the same "Testimony" we find that she was a valued Friend, a Minister from her 34th year, in which capacity she visited most of the Meetings in Great Britain (generally posting in her own carriage), and that in 1825 she visited Meetings in Ireland. She is said to have been

endowed with a very superior share of natural abilities & possessing an active mind she was induced to take part in the management of a variety of affairs beyond the generality of her sex.

One judges from the "Testimony" that she had the usual virtues of good woman Friends, great hospitality, kindness to friendless young Friends, consideration for the poor and great generosity, among other things helping her poor neighbours by providing allotments for them. One of her descendants has heard her spoken of as "a queen, a person of authority among Friends," whilst another suggests that "she ruled her household and possibly Newcastle Meeting with a firm hand." He understood she was a great character.

From what the writer can make out, the two

youngest daughters were those with the most marked characters, and it may be that the older ones were moulded more by their mother's hand ; but in the absence of more knowledge of many of them, one cannot say this with certainty, and in any case all turned out to be the good, useful, and devoted women to be looked for from such parents as Isaac and Rachel Wilson.

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